WHY I AM A SPIRITUAL VAGABOND

THOMAS L. MASSON

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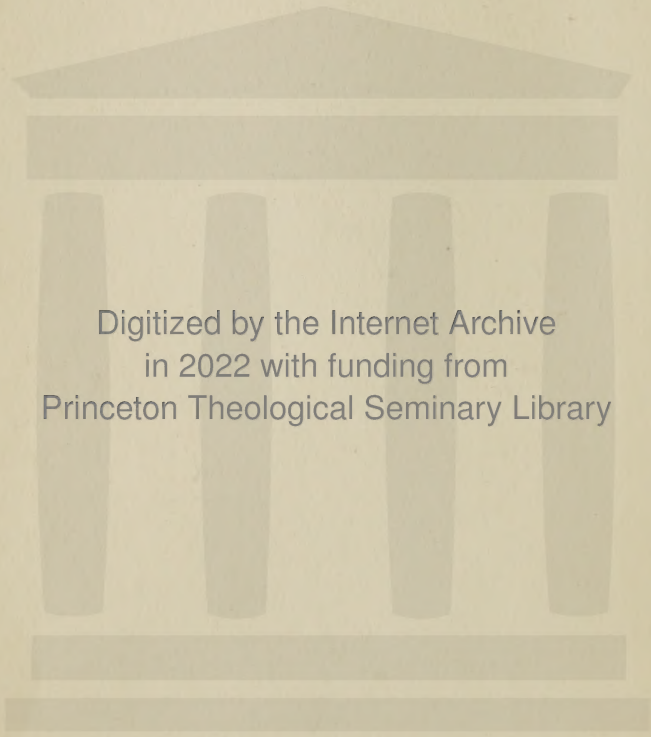
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WHY I AM A SPIRITUAL VAGABOND

A SOCIETY OF SPIRITUAL VAGABONDS
WILL YOU JOIN US?

THE world is full of spiritual vagabonds, outcasts who have no set place to worship, no family pew, no roof to cover their souls,—indeed, not much of anything in particular.

We are a hard crowd. We are not afraid of anything—not even ourselves. We don't seem to know where we are going, and we don't seem to care. The reason? Because we feel that we are HERE, all the time.

This is not propaganda for new recruits; that is n't necessary. There are enough of us already. We fill all the waste places—and spill over. We sleep any number in a bed—that is, when we have beds. We have a kind of gay feeling about God. You see, God is one of us, He is the best of us.

At present we are greatly scattered. The idea of this invitation is more of a round-up than anything

else. We want to count noses, broken or not. (We 're rough at times!) We want to compare notes, and tell stories to one another about our adventures in those waste places. But more than that: we mean business! We begin to believe that we have a world job on hand.

Besides, when you come to think of it, there are a whole lot of us who don't even know that we are spiritual vagabonds. We have been wandering around, here and there, under the stars, watching the sun rise, rubbing sticks together to make fire, eating when there was food, and going without when there was not, and exercising only enough to defend our bodies and keep them going. How careless we have been about our souls! They have done pretty much as they pleased.

It has been only recently that we have got the idea that these respectable religious folks need us. We have always been a little shy of regulars. We thought perhaps they had been building churches all these years, just to keep us out. We thought it shocked them to see how intimate we were with God. And the building material they have piled up! It 's a scandal! And all the time they were trying to save the world, each for himself.

Yes, they were exclusive—Catholic, Jew, Protestant, Mohammedan, and the rest of them. They have n't bothered us much. We like them, although they do seem to be fighting among themselves most of the time. We never had to have a creed. Maybe that 's what 's the matter with us.

Now this is a Committee of Spiritual Vagabonds. It is the Committee for America. We want everybody in all the world to join us, and put something over—well, to be frank, for God, whom we have learned to love for Himself along in the wide open spaces. We own up that we have often been careless and rough, and forgotten God. But now we are aroused, and we just feel we must make good somehow.

Somebody's got to.

The rest of 'em tried and failed. They had War, and Jazz. It is now up to us. We 've been slackers all along. We had the idea that God was doing his work through the churches, and that all we had to do was to be gay and have a good time. Well, we 're still going to have a good time, if we do have to clean up some. We want to help these religious folks out of the mess they have got us all into—that is, the world in general.

We cannot write, ourselves. We 've been too busy to learn, drifting around. So we got this man to do it. We don't know whether he can, either; but he said he would try—in his own way. We told him to put over this idea for us—that here we are, Spiritual Vagabonds, scattered all over, ashamed of ourselves that we have been just drifting about so long, and wishing to make good with God.

We are going to put America on the map spiritually, and start something with God for the whole world. All backsliders and strollers welcome. You don't have to sign on any dotted line or give any account of yourself. Sinners, take places anywhere.

We don't know whether this man who has written this book has made our whole idea plain or not. We told him to make it snappy, and we did n't tie any strings to him. He said he was n't a highbrow, but we suspect he is. He 's over our heads at times. He 's a trifle peevish in spots and takes himself seriously. But he 's sincere, and he was the best we could get on short notice.

Be kind to him.

SOCIETY OF SPIRITUAL VAGABONDS

Committee for America.

WHY I AM A SPIRITUAL VAGABOND

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BY
THOMAS L. MASSON

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I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it.

I JOHN 2.21

As the visible world is sustained by the invisible, so men, through all their trials and sins and sordid vocations, are nourished by the beautiful visions of their solitary dreamers.

ALLEN.

Remember the Lord, and fight.

NEHEMIAH.

BOOKS BY THOMAS L. MASSON

That Silver Lining.
A Bachelor's Baby and Some Grown-Ups.
A Corner in Women.
Dogs from Life.
Humor of Love in Verse and Prose.
Humorous Masterpieces of American Literature.
In Merry Measure.
Listen to These.
Little Masterpieces of American Humor.
The New Plato, or Socrates Redivivus.
Short Stories from Life.
The Best Stories in the World.
The Von Blumers.
Tom Masson's Annual for 1923.
Tom Masson's Annual for 1924.
Well, Why Not?
The Yankee Navy.

A WORD TO THE UNWISE

When the representatives of science, mathematics, or materialism deny that there is any spiritual life or any means of transcending the senses, they are convicting themselves of dense ignorance, and practically nullifying their own logic.

And this for the reason that, from the strict standpoint of logic, we cannot deny the existence of anything merely because we are not aware of it.

It would be entirely consistent for the scientists to declare that they do not believe in the spiritual life—that is their inalienable right; but to deny its existence is quite another matter.

A WORD TO ALL SPIRITUAL VAGABONDS

(Those who derive their material support from any institution, any propaganda, or any school of thought must of necessity be prejudiced witnesses. In the world, their reputations for consistency and the maintenance of themselves and their families, both depend upon their not changing their views. These views, in the great majority of cases, are not the result of original research or previous trial, but have been handed to them by others or are the outcome of environment and tradition. If, through some inner revolution, these views are changed, few have the courage to proclaim this fact, as their living depends upon their fixed front.

The PRIDE OF LEARNING and the PRIDE OF EARNING are the two great obstacles that confront the seeker after Truth. He is either patronized by scholars or bulldozed by experts.)

As vagabonds without fixed dwelling, who search for God under the open sky or within the secret recesses of our own souls, we hereby renounce our further submission to these twin masters of illusion, Learning and Tradition. In sunshine and shadow, up hill and down dale, through fire and water, we deal with God alone.

THIS BOOK

Is a revolt against tradition. It shows the practical value of the independent, individual, spiritual life, and its absolute necessity on the part of the American people if we are to save our own country and help save the world. It deals with the whole spiritual problem as if it were a business proposition or one of domestic management, its theme being that religion must be reorganized from the standpoint of the individual. It makes no claim to advanced scholarship, for the simple reason that it is above the plane of the intellect, comprehending learning merely as a fractional and unimportant part of the total spiritual consciousness.

It is written for men and women in all walks of life who are in trouble and who do not know the way out. It points the way to peace, through trial. It is not written for mollycoddles, cowards, intellectuals, or egoists. The author has occasionally, and purposely, repeated himself in order to give emphasis. Superficially read, this book will seem to contain inconsistencies.

It cannot be read hastily, with profit. It must be studied. It is devoid of sentimentality. And its teaching can be demonstrated by anybody. It disposes of the errors which from time immemorial have afflicted the human race. It interprets the sayings of Christ from practical experience, showing that as He lived, so we must live, without withdrawing in any way from the world or limiting ourselves in our daily lives and contact with others. It shows that real religion springs spontaneously from the heart and soul of mankind, that it is universal, that it is actually lived to-day by thousands, if not millions, of those who do not even know they possess it. It neither attacks nor criticizes any institution, but deals with all in love and charity, reserving rebuke for error alone.

THE METHOD DEFINED

The Author presents his case

THE METHOD DEFINED

In life there are no rehearsals. If there is a science or art of living, it must therefore be of supreme importance. Such a science should be open to all, rich and poor alike, not dependent on anything but one's own choice. It should admit of no doubt, be founded on absolute understanding. Is such a science of living possible? It is not only possible, but certain.

OUR SOCIAL SYSTEM

The society in which we live offers small hope of affording us any solution of our problem from the outside. Our educational system, as it increases in splendor and luxury owing to the endowments of multimillionaires, encourages a constantly growing cynicism and contempt for honest work. Parasites multiply. In certain strata of society cosmetics cover an almost inexhaustible lack of virtue.

Our idle rich breed only barrenness. Our religious institutions, within which may still burn the

fires of true Christianity, are the prey of glittering humbugs. Among our doctors are the noblest and most self sacrificing servants of humanity. Medical science has done much to alleviate pain; it has undoubtedly checked epidemics, but it has mimeographed diseases, and its total fruits are of doubtful value. Can it be proved that the lowering of the death rate in certain areas is due to anything else but improved hygiene? We are a favored race; it is difficult for us to realize that war prevails over a large part of the globe, accompanied by widespread violence and bloodshed.

Have the marvelous inventions of science added anything to the tranquillity of the human soul? No just comparison can be made with the past, which is an illusion, both history and science being only accumulated consciousness. The growing leisure of the great mass of people is occupied with the most trivial, if not debasing, pursuits. City slums flaunt their crime crop in the face of the most opulent country the world has seen. Gunmen and divorces flourish. Indecency and mediocrity have become standardized. If Art, Music and Literature seem to offer a competent consolation for being alive, the reply is that the approaches to this trinity of the senses require so much time and training that few can avail themselves of the privilege, which is open only to the elect. And

have they not failed to afford relief to those who have tried them? The State breeds its illegitimate progeny of laws, which turn and rend it. In the material world for thousands of years everything has been tried and everything has failed. We need no more geniuses. We have not yet caught up with those we have on hand.

THE INDIVIDUAL

The individual is no better off. If poor, he is a prey to the diabolism of poverty and the mob of panacea-mongers who batten on the proletariat. If rich, he may easily live to see his wife and children crushed beneath the very temples he has erected to secure them from want. For it is one thing for a man to learn how to control his earned money, and quite another to teach this to those he loves. We almost always overlook the truth that any increase in our material possessions beyond our needs carries with it this inevitable menace. Thus a man materially successful is buffeted between the Scylla and Charybdis of modern civilization—poverty on the one hand and parasites on the other. He may die before he fully realizes how much of a failure he is. Yet rich men often do live to see their thought externalized in the visible weaknesses of their sons and daughters.

All systems, institutions and material accumulations founded on expediency must fail. Form is everything. Substance nothing.

THE ONE CERTAINTY

There is only one certainty, which is constantly present to all of us, and that is that the source of our being is higher than ourselves.

There are times when we doubt everything else, for on every other subject the testimony is, or seems to be, conflicting. We may believe in the divinity of Christ one day, and disbelieve in it the next. We may believe one month that our prayers are answered, and the next month that they are not. In the morning, as we rise and view the splendor of the sun, we may believe that God is a universal spirit, an essence; while at night, when the shadows fall, we may think of him as a person. Or in our moments of despair, we may think of him as a god of vengeance, or that there is n't any God, and that things are just governed by chance.

HEAVEN LIES WITHIN US

But no matter what belief or what doubt we hold at any time, we know we came from somewhere, we know that whatever it is that gave us our conscious-

ness is more powerful than we are. From this rises the conviction that it is inside of us and not outside of us that all the power comes from, although we do not always understand how this can be. The difficulties we get into, the sorrows, griefs, despairs, misfortunes, and all the attendant horde of earthly miseries—including the proper understanding of them—are due entirely to the fact that we are constantly forgetting or ignoring this one certainty. We are turned aside by voices, by messages, in short, by the hundreds of sensations that flow through our minds in a constant stream.

A friend said to me one day:

"My mind is not so good as it was."

That remark is a common example of the truth that our minds are one thing and we are another. What is the I within us—or me—which enables me to speak of my mind as if it were a motor accessory? Which is it?

This unknown I is the imperishable thing whereby I come eventually to attain to a sense of individuality.

WE ARE IMMORTAL

One of the most ridiculous assertions in the world is that there is no immortality. It is equivalent to saying that there is no heat in the sun. Measured

by the standards of the human senses, immortality can not be proved any more than anything else can be proved. And nothing else can. Try to prove that Napoleon was either good or bad, that men did or did not descend from monkeys, or that lightning never strikes twice in the same place. Try to prove that Euclid was right, and a dozen mathematicians will rise up to prove that he was wrong. All things are necessarily in chaos, because they are constantly shifting their base; and their base is an illusion of the mind.

Now immortality IS. You believe it or not, according as you have released yourself from the bondage of the senses and are able to understand spiritual values. I am surrounded on all sides by those who, should they read these words by chance, would not have the slightest idea of their real meaning. It is a fact, however, within my own experience that a casual word dropped by accident will lie dormant in the mind that receives it, to flower later.

PUTTING IT UP TO HEADQUARTERS

What I am insisting upon, for our present purpose, is that we drop everything else but the simple proposition that there is a source of our Being, and that henceforth we will deal with nobody else. It is

only from the standpoint of the *I AM* that we can arrive at certainty.

The next step?

It is so plain that possibly nobody would ever think of it. It is to listen. Just to sit still and listen. Meditate on listening.

Consider what this means. One must be entirely alone. One must do absolutely nothing, for to do anything at all is to distract one from the great object. The source of our Being knows infinitely more than we. Therefore the first step of our contact must be one of attention. That is so obvious as to need no argument.

WE MUST HAVE HAD A CREATOR

Can we go any further than this in our terms? I think so. The reader must follow me as long as he understands me. When he disagrees with me, let him either throw this book away, or else put it aside and try it again later.

Suppose we now select a word which we can use as a symbol to convey the idea, even if it is a very imperfect idea, of the infinite source of our Being. For the present I purposely avoid using the word God, because it has been used in so many various ways, and with so many various meanings.

Are you satisfied with the word Creator? Does this word not cover the idea? What I am was created by some one, by some force or power. I can therefore say that this power is my Creator. This gives me a convenient, all-embracing word, untainted by a mass of sense associations.

What you do, therefore, in the very beginning is to sit quite still, removing from your consciousness all the distracting influences you can, little by little,—for it does n't all come at once,—and listen to the voice of your Creator.

Do you agree to that? If so, what is the next step?

It must be presupposed, at this point, that you and I are perfectly sincere in our desires; that, indeed, we are even desperate. Also, the grand thing about our position now is that no argument between us is possible. We agree that we have been created by a Creator, and that, whoever this Creator may be, the only possible way to find out about him is to give him our attention, to ask him with all the passion and craving within us to enlighten us about himself.

Logically, this is as far as I can take you. This is the opening to the straight and narrow path. You can see that yourself. The moment I begin to tell you any more, you are going to begin to doubt me; so that the whole matter of this book would drop, if it were not for one thing. I am going to explain

this in the best way I can, so you must have a little patience with me at the start. You must tolerate me a little while longer, until I either convince you or not, as the case may be. Of course, as a matter of fact, in the end you convince yourself. You try it, at first haltingly, and often in doubt, you drop it, you go back to it, and so on, until you get a little footing. Then you simply cannot retreat.

YOU

First, I must tell you what you are, for if you are not what I describe you to be, this book would be an utter waste of time. I mean, in general, that you must be ready to receive this book—that you must be, say, one in ten thousand.

First, you are in doubt.

Second, you are in trouble. This at times has been so great that you have been in the utmost despair. This despair has even—during certain grim moments—driven you into horrendous thoughts of making away with yourself. I am putting this in the most delicate way I can. But you will understand.

Third, your health is n't what it should be.

Fourth, not being quite certain of anything, and also made desperate by your difficulties, you are now in an attitude of mind where you are ready to wel-

come anything which will give you a permanent and abiding sense of security. Nay, you are ready to welcome anything which will even give you temporary relief.

A PROPOSITION

If you are what these brief definitions lamely indicate (fill out the complete picture for yourself), then my proposition is this:

Beginning with the solid foundation laid down in this chapter (read it over and over, if necessary, until you understand it), I will give you a number of directions, arranged in what I term the natural order of spiritual development. Each one of these directions, if properly followed, will carry its own proof. If at first it is not demonstrated, try it until it is. Remember that it requires what *seems,* in many cases, a long time to take even one step forward. It took me two years to understand one simple segment of universal truth.

NO SUCH THING AS TIME

In the lives of a great many mystics, there are records of decades passed in groping, before light came. Do not let this discourage you. It is an

illusion of the senses, because, spiritually, there is no time.[1] Einstein and others have proved this mathematically, a truth which has been so long known to those who live in the spirit. What seems to be time is nothing but the succession in combinations of matter, which is in a constant state of transition, or flux. All matter (I am still writing from the purely material and scientific standpoint) is composed of electrons. Nothing beyond this is known. The electrons have not been seen, their presence has only been mathematically demonstrated, and their nature, a guess. All that is really known is that matter (and by this I mean the so-called material universe) has no validity as substance. It is nothing. Attenuated, it becomes invisible. The wonderful work done by scientists has shown that each form or element of matter has its place in what is called the atomic scale, according to the number of electrons contained

[1] Here is a short description of Einstein's theory of relativity by Viscount Haldane, in "The Reign of Relativity" (Yale) which may be found helpful to the lay mind: "These considerations led Einstein to insist in 1915 on the broad principle that the motion of all bodies is nothing more than their apparent change in situation relatively to one another. The objects which constitute our universe will present appearances which differ in every case according to the situation and kind of motion of the observers with their measuring instruments. These appearances are the actual reality. Absolute position, shape, and measurement are all unmeaning. Space and time disappear as self-subsistent, and in their place we get a plurality of relative systems." Yes indeed; and all coming back to the eternal I AM!

in each one of the atoms that compose it. We must not here permit ourselves to be deceived or overawed by the astounding legerdemain of these laboratory experts.

IT IS ALL IN YOUR MIND

The fact is, they know nothing more than we do. All they have really done is, intensively, to dissect, analyze, and classify, in the most minute and mathematical manner, certain forms of consciousness. For this, they are entitled to all praise. But beyond this, they are just as much at sea as the humblest street waif. And because all this is a *mind* process, that is to say, material, and based on the senses, it can never get beyond itself. Many of those involved in it (mathematicians, philosophers, biologists, etc.) flatly deny that it is possible to find truth anywhere outside of this Realm of Reason. Some of them are almost passionate in their denunciation of those who make claims for the spirit—for instance, Bertrand Russell. But not all. Sir Oliver Lodge, a great scientist, believes in spiritualism. I do not—not at all in his sense. His spiritualism is merely an attenuated form of materialism, mixed up, however, with sublime aspirations. So Conan Doyle. There have been, and are, a fair proportion of scientists

who devoutly believe in a God and are very humble about their intellects.

Now all of this I have just written is merely a brief aside, affording only a glimpse of some of the mental problems which constantly confront and baffle the curious mind. Once we go our own way, we need not allow them to disturb us. They will all be readily absorbed. Christ solved them all in a few sentences. This is also, however, only an aside, as we should not go too fast, that is, beyond our own rate of progress.

BE PATIENT

Do not be discouraged if you do not at first glance understand all there is in this book, as you read it; or, on the other hand, do not think, because some of it seems too obvious and what you know already, that it can teach you nothing. Do not jump to conclusions. We are all of us, more or less, victims of the total mass of racial thought which presses upon us from the (apparently) outside world, and this leads us frequently to argue, or to utter opinions based on nothing at all except hearsay. What I have hinted at briefly in this chapter will be taken up in sufficient detail later on. Hold your opinions in abeyance until you have read the book through. To grasp its

meaning thoroughly, it must be read over and over; must be studied. It will repay the study you give it.

WE ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE

The question may be asked right here, in advance, How does this book differ from so many other books? The answer is that it offers a method whereby one can attain peace, alone, without any instructor, and without attaching oneself to any institution. This is by no means either to ignore or to condemn the churches and various other ethical societies. There is absolutely no restriction on one's activities. There is no exclusiveness, so far as one's ordinary occupations are concerned. It simply does n't matter. It did n't matter to Christ; why should it to us? We cast aside the world, while mingling with it. That seems a paradox, but it is not. We are free people. We are everywhere. We are united in the spirit. And that is all there is to it. Furthermore, in every church, there is a fair proportion just like us. Maybe everybody is like us—I should not be surprised. My passing thought right here is this—that most of us are afraid all the time *not* to belong to something. We are constantly being asked to join something new. The Americans, indeed, have a passion for joining things. We must all be on com-

mittees, we must be vice-presidents, we must be chairman of something or other. Now this kind of material activity has been transferred to the religious field and the pressure is very great.

CHURCHES?

If we don't go to church, there are towns in which we are likely to be ostracised. Indeed, joining a church, in many communities, is the open sesame to society. And that is precisely one thing which makes the churches so futile. They are composed too largely of people whose sole object in life is to be just friendly and sociable. Within each church, as I conceive it, is a small body of people like ourselves, who gather there to fight their desperate battle for salvation. That is the white spot of heat which keeps each church alive. This book, then, is merely a book for the lonely soul.

JUST LISTEN

Let me now give the first direction, which, indeed, has been already so imperfectly indicated.

I. Listen to your Creator.

The answer (which seemingly may be delayed for days, weeks, months, or even years) is often instantaneous (you will look back upon this afterward and

agree that I am right), or, if it is seemingly delayed, that will be your fault. I do not mean to imply that you are to blame for this when I state that it is your fault; all I mean is that you are so tangled up with material sense-conditions that you cannot be expected to understand the first message when it comes; the realization of this may not come until long afterward. It is n't your fault; it is your ignorance. And these halting ignorances fill our spiritual lives. We keep breaking them down, one by one, as we advance.

Remember that whatever message comes to you from your Creator is the reverse of what it would be if expressed materially. You sit still, alone. You listen to the voice of your Creator. Nothing happens. Wishing to be fair with your Creator, you try it still a second and third time. And still nothing happens.

DON'T QUIT NOW

Right here is time for you to pause. You must be so much in dead earnest as not to be ready to throw up your hands at the first apparent failure. Two things are essential for this condition, as a general rule, although there may be, I suppose, exceptions. These two things are (A) that you are overwhelmed by your difficulties, and (B) that you have tried every-

thing else and are now ready to do anything. In short, you are driven into it. Of course, both of these attitudes are somewhat shameless when you come to consider them, for they both presuppose that your Creator is the very last one to be considered. Both attitudes imply, apparently, an initial selfishness. You are doing this for yourself alone. There is nothing altruistic about you. But for the moment do not let this disturbing thought bother you. Read on. It is your intention that counts in the long run. It will be apparent that, in truth, you can institute no comparison with others, and that when you straighten yourself out, you are in reality straightening out the universe. There is nothing new in this. It has all been said before, but it is here compressed and—considering the vastness of the subject—simplified for practical purposes.

HOW MUCH ARE YOU WORTH?

Now, as far as your material condition is concerned,—and this is what seems to concern you most for the time being,—you must have some assets. You may be badly off in this respect, but you cannot be actually starving. You may be in physical pain, but it might be worse. If you will ignore your so-called material liabilities for the moment and

count up your assets, you will probably discover that you are much better off than you supposed you were. You will, indeed, find your assets not inconsiderable —perhaps enough, after all, to thank your Creator for. Maybe you had not thought about this. Believe me, it is a great step forward. Indeed, it is not improbable that the honest list of your assets may astonish you. Your mind, you see, had been altogether working on the other side. Also, to get back to these liabilities, you may be astonished to discover that, after all, most of them are imaginary—they lie in the future, and the future is always imaginary. They are largely concerned with the calamities which you are fearful may happen tomorrow—or the day after.

HOW THE MESSAGE COMES

After you have done precisely these two things,—both of which require courage,—don't you see that you have really got your message from your Creator? He has answered you, as selfish about it as you appeared to be in the beginning, in the only way possible—through yourself. Later on, you will come to see that you are quite inseparable from Him.

And that is what sitting still and listening does—if you are in earnest. It stirs you up from the in-

side. And it is always from the inside that your Creator speaks to you. It is what you actually do, or are made to do, yourself, which counts, and not what you thought, in answer to your prayer, might or could or would be done to you.

IT IS UP TO YOU

This book makes you do the work yourself. You are always both active and passive: passive to what is going to happen to you, active in what you are doing yourself, intensively.

Prayer is only something which, ascending in its intensity, changes us and gives our Creator the opportunity to work through us. That, always, constitutes the answer. We ourselves, as I have said, are part of our Creator. We are One with Him. Through prayer we come, slowly, to understand this. The first step I have indicated—sitting quite still and listening—opens up the way.

It is at this point that you are now ready to go on alone. Indeed, you *must* go on alone. You will find yourself immediately lifted up into another atmosphere. You will no longer be a critic of others, but will begin to love them. You will no longer hate or scorn anybody; you will understand that the part of them which you have hated and scorned does n't

belong to them, and you will begin to see this plainly, because you will also see that the part you have hated and scorned in yourself does n't belong to you. The rule is absolute. Nothing must hereafter come between you and your Creator. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

From then on, you become a student of spiritual thought. Every message, all ideas, your reading, the sensations that come to you in your daily life, are all put to the test. In the silence of your closet you come at last to know them as true or not. Your closet, interpreted spiritually, means any place where you are in silent communion with your Creator.

You must never depart from this rule. Thereafter your life is changed. You still suffer at times, suffer intensely. You still live, in ordinary acceptance of that term. But you understand.

EVERYBODY HAS THE SAME PROBLEM

Making our start from this outlined point, I shall go over other matters, personal or otherwise; but near the close of this book I come back to this first chapter, and the various problems which confront you individually will all be taken up, for you will be surprised, quite possibly, to learn that the problem which you thought your own is common to all mankind.

Meanwhile, in the chapters that follow, it is necessary for me to make a survey of the world we live in, in order that we may face it in its various aspects, in the spirit of Truth, without fear or favor, always bearing in mind our initial point of view, and always remembering that, in the end, we shall return to it.

But one thing more is necessary. And that is the question about the validity of our standard.

And by standard I mean the gage which, throughout, we must necessarily adopt in order to test the truth or falsity of everything which presents itself to us as we proceed. How can we be sure that this gage is correct?

Indeed, upon the answer to this question depends our entire salvation. If you are going to build any sort of structure, you must know that your foot-rule is correct, that it does n't expand or contract as you go along. Otherwise, in spite of all your work, you will get nowhere.

WE ALL HAVE IT

The answer is this: There is a spiritual gage within us which always enables us to tell the true from the false, the right from the wrong. We don't

know what this is. We only know it is there. As you advance in spiritual insight, you will understand, however. The most that can be said now is that, so far as our material judgment is concerned, our analysis always fails us beyond a certain point. We seem to make mistakes; we involve ourselves in error; but it should never be forgotten that all questions, no matter what they are, must ultimately be referred to this unknown judge, who sits up in our consciousness and says whether a thing is right or wrong. His decision is often delayed. But it is all we have to go by. He has no substitute. The false God of reason is not a substitute. The most intricate calculation of the most advanced mathematician must always be referred to this judge, which, for practical purposes, in this instance we call the mind. Thus there is no essential difference, in the determination of right and wrong, truth or error, between the highest and the lowest types of mankind. When, for example, we come in contact with the most primitive races in the world, we find this rule holds good. A savage may thus be little better than a beast; he may be a cannibal; he may not be able to count more than three; but as soon as we come to live with him, to study him, to teach him, we recognize that he is the same as we are, only more rudimentary. He has

this gage. It might take a long time, but we know that eventually he can be released from his ignorance, so that his ability to distinguish right from wrong will be as highly developed as ours. Indeed, we cannot say absolutely that this is not so already, for our human standards are largely based on tradition and environment, and the most cultured human may be even more blind to the truth than the humblest savage who roams the forest. Intellect is no guarantee of righteousness.

We may therefore conclude this brief chapter, with the following propositions:

1. The spirit or force that created us must be greater than we are, and must of necessity comprehend all that we are. We term this force our Creator. For the moment we must put aside all else from our consciousness.

2. In order to understand this Creator, we adopt the hypothetical method of sitting still and listening to him. We try this as an experiment and demonstrate its correctness through our experience.

3. There is a stable power within us, variously referred to as judgment or a sense of right and wrong, which, though at times seemingly obscured by error, or undeveloped, is fundamental, absolute, and to which we can with perfect confidence refer all things,

bearing in mind that we must do this with patience, working out our salvation in fear and trembling.

It should be understood that the course I have thus outlined does not take away from us anything but unreality. It does not, for instance, separate us from obedience. We are obedient to our Creator, and he directs us on our way.

TERMS AND SYMBOLS

The author explains the confusion which has arisen, due to the mixture of the terms relating to the material and spiritual life, respectively.

TERMS AND SYMBOLS

If the reader has followed me thus far and we are now in complete harmony as to our fundamental position and starting-point, as outlined in the last chapter, then a few words of explanation are necessary in order that the chapters that follow may be understood.

We are on very different ground from now on, because we shall be dealing with two forms of expression, namely, the spiritual and the material.

Nearly all writers on ethics confuse these two forms. Christ solved the problem by parables. He made it plain that when he used material objects, he did so to symbolize spiritual meanings. "Unto you," he said to his disciples, "the mysteries of heaven are made known, but not to every one." He discriminated between those who had spiritual insight and those who had it not.

OUR DREAM WORLD

I well remember when, as a young man, I first awoke to the overwhelming fact that the world I

lived in was an illusion—a dream of the senses.

It came about through my reading Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason." The first forty pages of that book left me mentally paralyzed. For two years thereafter I wandered about in a wilderness of painful doubt and philosophic chaos. The impact of the truth made me utterly powerless to read anything else. When finally I awakened from my meditations, there were vast burned places in my soul. Sitting in the charred remains, I began my life all over again. For twenty years afterward I meditated on philosophy. Never a scholar, and only a superficial reader, I was, however, addicted to the minute study of those about me. I have often thought, if my closest friends could have realized how I was studying them, analyzing their motives, observing their trivial actions, spending long hours at night comparing them and studying them, trying to separate their souls from their bodies, they would have wanted to brain me on the spot. Many have often said to me, "You have no resentment." They referred to some one who had done me a fancied injury. No, I never had any more than a momentary resentment during this entire period of twenty years, for the reason that I was too curious to know why people in general acted as they did or why I acted as I did in connection with them.

I never really regarded others as apart from myself; it was as if we were all mixed up together in a sort of fleshly mess. I am now referring briefly to this experience because it is a part of my plan to make the reader see what I am driving at in this book. Of course, we all study others; but I came to do this early with definite motives. A salesman's motives are personal in studying others, because he is doing it for commercial purposes. My motives were otherwise. During this whole period, I was able to support myself in comfort without being dependent upon other people for supplies. There was no necessity on my part to be tied up to any one religion or belief. I had only a keen desire to find out about life. Starting out as a cynic, my cynicism was at length cast aside—as I shall explain later—when I was able to discern the difference between the material and the spiritual. But during that period I mention, I was curious, beyond anything else in the way of sympathy or emotion.

CHILDBIRTH

Many men have confessed to me that they could not stand being present at the birth of their children, that their sympathy for their wives, and the emotions

aroused, made them shrink from contact with the actual suffering. I never had any such feeling; neither did I ever have any feeling of sympathy over the illness of any member of my family. I attended the birth of each child with all the excitement of the scientific mind, almost wholly impersonal. I often used to wonder at myself over this apparent indifference. Yet it was not indifference. I would shiver with fear of losing some observed detail, while the loss of any one of my flock (as bitter experience later taught me) would have driven me into a wilderness of grief. But of actual fear of such consequence, I had none. One of my children was born without any blood in her. The umbilical cord had got twisted, so that the blood in the placenta did not flow through into her body. It was a critical moment.

The doctor grabbed the child, placed her on her stomach across his knee, straightened out the cord, and gave her a tremendous wallop on the back. Then I saw the white of her tiny body turning blue-black with the force of the blood flowing into it. I remember quite well speculating during that exciting moment as to how the doctor knew exactly what to do, for he was young and I counted this an unusual experience for him.

MYSTERY

This was one of the most wonderful moments of my life. You may not believe this, but for years after, when I wanted a subject, I meditated on that great moment.

To-day I could repeat that operation without missing a detail. When the body was full of blood (I recall quite vividly a comparison with a mosquito filling himself up) the doctor snapped off the cord with scissors and tied it with a tape, leaving about an inch and a half to spare. For days I watched that cord end dry up. There was another thing. You know every child cries as soon as it is born—at least, all my other children cried. This child did n't cry at first—not until the blood got in. How could she? When she uttered that first yell, I whooped in my soul, for I knew that she was all right. I mention this because it would be wrong to convey the impression that I was devoid of feeling. The fact is, I really entered into the sufferings of others. I had labor-pains with all my children. But I never was afraid or anxious about such physical suffering in others, or even in myself. My curiosity never allowed me to be. This is what I mean by a study of life itself at first-hand, and its being so much more

important than a study of books; so much in passing, to clear my meaning for the reader.

AUTOMATIC CHURCH-GOING

One other moment, however, I must recall, as being in the same case with the childbirth moment I have referred to. And that was one day when the vestryman of a church I attended confessed to me privately that he did n't know what it was all about. This was a revelation, for the man's devotion had greatly impressed me. I studied that man for years afterward, reflecting and meditating about him. I watched him raise a family. I don't think, in all this same period of twenty years, he ever missed going to church every Sunday. He always wore a frock-coat and silk hat and always took up the collection. It is still wonderful to me that in all that period he could have kept on doing the same thing over and over without any awakening. What a feat of endurance! But I have no doubt there are thousands like him.

THE IDEA IS WHAT COUNTS

This example illustrates precisely what I mean when I say that it is one thing to be an observer of

certain phenomena, and quite another to be so under the urge of an idea. All the time I was groping in this world of illusion,—this dream-life of man,—hoping, like *Micawber*, that something would turn up. And in common with all the observers the world has ever known, nothing real did turn up. I went into mental bankruptcy, and immediately thereafter threw myself into the arms of a spiritual receiver. So much by way of aside.

OUR VOCABULARY QUICKSAND

Two thoughts now emerge. The first is, that if all the fleeting, changing world we see about us is an illusion,—a mere figment of the imagination,—then it must be evident that the vocabulary which goes with it is also an illusion. How then are we to know anything? And in particular, how can we assume to know anything of the so-called spiritual or invisible universe when the only terms we can use to explain it are those that come out of the material? Here indeed is a problem.[1]

[1] We experience, not the object, but our experience of the supposed object. Hence, since our experience is the only thing of which we are directly aware, there is no need to suppose that the object, or indeed the whole world of external matter believed to be independent of mind, is anything more than a mental construction, a species of abstraction made by mind for its own purposes from the concrete whole of experience. But if there is no external ob-

I shall make no attempt to explain this now. My present purpose is to make clear the enormous confusion into which controversalists and, indeed, all writers on religion fall. Thus the whole religious vocabulary is a structure built on sand, and to extract any meaning from it,—from even the most sincere and scholarly books,—requires on the part of the reader a spiritual insight which will enable him to interpret the meaning. Otherwise the book falls dead.

SPIRITUAL PANACEAS, OR CURE-ALLS

A second thought is this: Taking advantage of the universal craving among human beings for some certainty about God and the hereafter, for that passionate craving for consolation in trouble, too many writers frankly yield to temptation, fly above their material vocabulary, and build up a spiritual universe divided into planes, with angels of their own

ject it is clear that mind must create its own objects, and we are accordingly forced to the view that experience is a self-determining and self-creating activity, which is both self-begetting and self-begotten. And, since whatever is real must be of this type, it follows that reality is a universal Mind or Spirit which creates alike itself and its environment. From—"Introduction to Modern Philosophy," by C. E. M. Joad (Oxford).

manufacture—all this constructed from their material imaginations. We read in the Bible that no man shall see the face of God. Among all this literature, we are here on a very delicate ground of criticism, for much of it is painstaking and admirable. For emotional people with lively fancies, however, it is easy to build up a hierarchy of angels. On the other hand, a genuine spiritual experience can be translated into meaning in no other way except through material images. We see this difficulty all through the rhapsodies of the mystics—the Song of Solomon is a good example. I mention it here because it is important to understand it. A spiritual experience is valid only when it produces results—that is, brings forth fruit. Each individual has a logical right to vision for himself his own spiritual experience, putting it into terms which he himself can use as recalling previous illuminations. That is the most he can do. Swedenborg, who had a scientific training, defined his spiritual experience in terms of the actual. His writing is very beautiful. To those who understand spiritual development, not only is there nothing shocking about it, but it is quite understandable. At the same time, the novice should be chary about taking it as a guide. I refer the reader to Swedenborg's works.

MATERIALISM VS. IDEALISM

I may say quite frankly that between these two extremes—the gross materialist and the get-rich-quick spiritual healer—I was, in common with many others, disgusted. And one of the purposes for which this book is written is to make plain that there is but one straight path to spiritual freedom and peace, and that it is along the line I have indicated and will define more clearly in the end. In short, we must take nobody's word; we must work the thing out for ourselves.

NO ONE ELSE CAN DO IT FOR US

When Christ accosted the man who sat by the side of the pool and who had suffered from an infirmity for thirty-eight years, and asked him if he wanted to be made whole, what did the man reply? He said, in effect, that he had been lying there for so long, waiting for some one to help him to the pool, but they all passed by or crowded him out. I purposely use modern language to explain this incident. Christ said to him, "Get up," and the man, doubtless to his own astonishment as well as that of others, immediately got up and walked away. Now this is a perfect example of what I mean. We are all waiting for some one to help us to the pool. We gather in-

firmity as we wait. We like it. We are mollycoddles. We expect to be carried about. There is n't one of us who, if he really desires to do so, cannot get up and walk off and be free. It lies within us. We are a part of God. "I have no power in myself," said Christ, "but only from the Father." Is not this plain? We must resist the softening tendencies of the age we live in. These tendencies exist in the churches, as well as outside. When the preachers ceased talking about hell, the church declined; not necessarily because the hell-fire they taught was real, in the sense they taught it, but because it is very real in the sense I mean. If this is not so, how do you account for the immense number of suicides and marital troubles, for the evident unrest and unhappiness? Believe me, hell is very real.

To understand my meaning here, we must first sternly discard all the material evidence,—books, personalities, everything that comes to us through the senses,—and little by little get our understanding clear. In order that in the end we may come to this understanding unfettered, I shall, in the few chapters following, present a superficial description of the world we live in (the world of illusion), first making plain, as I hope, the Peace and War problem before America, and then going on to the individual life, dealing with Man as a Dream God. In these chap-

ters I shall use the ordinary vocabulary of sense life mingled with spiritual meanings, the distinction between the two, being, I think, quite clear to the average intelligence, like myself. In stating this, however, it is only fair to say that having given myself so much close thought and for many years to this text, it really demands the close attention of readers.

CHRIST

On the threshold of this our joyful, but necessarily slow emergence from the darkness of the material shadow-dream into the light of Reality, and keeping constantly in mind our rigid unrelaxed scrutiny of every intruder upon our thought, it may now be asked, What of Christ? If, as the reader will see, I quote Him constantly in these pages, and if my whole book is based upon His life and teaching, how can He be proved to the lonely, vagabond soul in the same way in which we are logically bound to acknowledge a Creator? My reply to this blunt question is simple and absolute. Christ proves Himself. The Christ spirit rises up out of the spiritual consciousness as inevitably as the sun in the heavens. No theology, no philosophy or critical exegesis can for a moment blur the sense of His miracles or divinity to those who seek Him in the true spirit of humility.

WAR, PEACE, AND AMERICA

The author abandons for the moment the individual and textual point of view and takes up the question of country. He shows how the idea of peace has become so misunderstood, and what real peace is. This chapter is designed to go the other extreme, from the problem of the individual to the problem of America. Later on will be shown the tie that binds the two together.

WAR, PEACE, AND AMERICA

One of the most curious paradoxes of modern thought is this: What Christ said is generally admitted to be true, yet when any suggestion is made that by following Him the world will be saved, it is immediately met with jeering and contempt. This always happens if any man declares that war can be stopped by religion. The reason for this is due entirely to the confusion of terms. What religion is to one man is exactly opposite to what it is to another man.

If religion is regarded as a vast network of ecclesiastical politics, organized and controlled by efficiency hypocrites, then no wonder it is said that religion will not stop war. Real religion, as I shall make plain, is no such thing.

AN UNSTABLE WORLD

What has recently happened in the world is very evident to the close observer. Material inventions have outstripped spiritual development. Unless

spiritual harmony can be restored,—as it will be,—America and Europe both will destroy themselves. That is the bare fact.

War cannot be cured by inventing something to cure it, nor by committees. It can only be cured by a long, patient process dealing with individuals. All progress worth while has come through single individuals. In the present instance, individuals must gradually be converted to the true religion, to a right knowledge of a real God. As this spirit of conversion spreads, the thing will grow by its own momentum; then everybody in the world will wonder why it took so long. War will die.

EVERY-DAY LIFE SHOWS IT

If you live in a small community, or even in a city where you are surrounded by a number of friends and acquaintances, you will see what a wonderful asset you have in this communion with all these friends. If you will go back in your mind—well, say historically—to old days, you will see that this modern atmosphere of harmony is much more clearly defined than of old. Manners are better, courtesy is more prevalent.

Furthermore, this community of yours is on friendly terms with all the other adjacent commun-

ities. You are not at war, you never could be at war. The war problem, so far as you are concerned, has been settled.

This will eventually be the condition of the world.

That, of course, is only one angle from which the picture can be viewed. It leaves out all the well-known evils of the day. It merely reveals a section of the true spirit of humanity, dwelling together in peace and harmony. It shows that this is the permanent idea, while the other ideas are fleeting.

THE MATERIALISTS HAVE FAILED US

Let us consider for a moment the question of war and peace. If all the best men in the world who have been working to make the world more comfortable—the scientists, the biologists, the inventors, the medical pioneers, etc.—have been working all these centuries to make the world what it is, and if we all admit that, materially it is a marvelous world, what use is it going to be to us if, at any moment, we may be thrown into another world war which will destroy us?

The most that it would be possible for all these wonderful men to do would be make a world so full of devices that we should all be physically happy for say, an average of sixty years each. If that is what

they have all been trying for, we can take off our hats to them and salute them as magicians.

But how about that war?

The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, one of the most eminent British statesmen, after going on to show the horrors of poison gas and the possibility of pestilences "methodically prepared and deliberately launched upon man and beast," has this to say about war:

> It is evident that whereas an equally contested war under such conditions might work the ruin of the world and cause an immeasurable diminution of the human race, the possession by one side of some overwhelming scientific advantage would lead to the complete enslavement of the unwary party. Not only are the powers now in the hand of man capable of destroying the life of nations, but for the first time they afford to one group of civilized men the opportunity of reducing their opponents to absolute helplessness.
>
> In barbarous times, superior martial virtues—physical strength, courage, skill, discipline—were required to secure such supremacy; and in the hard evolution of mankind, the best and fittest stocks came to the fore.
>
> But no such saving guarantee exists to-day. There is no reason why a base, degenerate, immoral race should not make an enemy far above them in quality the prostrate object of their caprice or tyranny, simply because they happened to be possessed at a given moment of some new death-

dealing or terror-working process and were ruthless in its employment. The liberties of men are no longer to be guarded by their natural qualities, but by their dodges; and superior virtue and valor may fall an easy prey to the latest diabolical trick.

WHY NOT GIVE GOD A CHANCE?

If this does not mean that materialism has failed to advance the human race one iota on the road to happiness,—a happiness even purely material,—what *does* it mean? Why are nations so restless to-day all over the world? Does not each inhabitant know in his heart that war is always possible?

If then, materialism has failed to find a cure for itself, why does it scoff because we, who have tried spiritual means and know they cannot fail, venture to suggest that real religion is the cure? If these gentlemen have nothing better to offer us than what they have already presented us with, is it not high time that they now take a back seat, and give God a chance? There are some of us who would be willing to be crucified over again—however inconvenient that might be—if by so submitting, we could demonstrate to the majority the fact that real Christianity began the moment when Jesus was turned out of the synagogue.

PEACE, A MISNOMER

I have stated that there is a confusion in terms. Let us consider peace for a moment.

Few know what peace really is. Peace is not necessarily an illusion; it is only a misnomer, a term wrongly applied. The ordinary condition in any country, when we are pleased to say that it is at peace, is really one of warfare.

All the elements within that country are at war with one another, in greater or lesser degree; the proletarian is fighting with the plutocrat; the fanatic, with the conservative; vice, with virtue. Each element, indeed, is striving to assert its own mastery over all the others, or, perhaps, fighting to maintain its own existence. More human beings are killed in peace than in war. Thus we have warfare when the nation as a whole is declared to be at peace. But when the nation is declared to be at war, all of these elements unite temporarily for a common purpose, this union being a gradual one in proportion as the pressure of the war increases.

THE INVISIBLE

But much deeper than this union of material things in such a nation during a war in which it may be

fighting for its life is the union of its invisible elements, producing a constantly deeper spiritual peace in proportion to the common spiritual peril. When several nations—as, for example, during the war, and even since—are in various stages of this inward peace, from the historical, biological, psychological, and ethical standpoints it is well worth while to study and compare them. We shall, if so we will, obtain from this comparison a deep personal application.

Britain knew instinctively and instantly there could be no peace for her without joining France and Belgium; and the sense of Britain's great peace grew upon her as the war continued. And how was it with us? Think of the days, the weeks, the months, the years, after the *Lusitania*—and shudder for America's spirit of real peace, that began to come over us only after the declaration of war.

RIGHT AND WRONG

Peace as I have defined it, whether it be individual or national, is nothing after all but the consciousness of having fulfilled the moral law. In plain terms, it is only doing what we feel to be right; and this question of what is right, as Kant has so plainly pointed out, is a priori. In reality, it is the foundation of all character. It is entirely independent of

any process of reason. No sophistry affects it; every man, no matter how low in the scale, Kant shows quite clearly, has this sense of right and wrong; and the most abandoned criminal understands his errors as plainly as the clergyman who exhorts him.

RIGHT AND WRONG

Furthermore the question of right or wrong, so far as a nation is concerned, is one which cannot be determined by any individual. It is an abstract question. It is not a question, on the one hand of pacifism, and on the other of imperialism or commercialism, but of what the nation feels as a whole. Most of us are ready to believe now that, in our civil war, the North was right, and we rejoice in the preservation of the Union and consider the sacrifices made inevitable. There are still, probably, a few who do not believe this. So with our world war and the part of America. These differences, however are of no moment. What we are now most concerned about is to see what war really is and its relationship to peace.

Psychologists and physicians who are interested in the redemption of patients afflicted with certain perverse habits tell us that the first condition preceding the cure is to get the patient into a mental condition

where he wants to be cured: that is to say, he must surrender his obsession. After that, the way is open to a cure. In short, he must first get a foothold on the moral law, which is always present. Peace, therefore, in its broadest human application, is only the tranquillity which comes with the gradual accomplishment of the right thing, and that "peace that passeth all understanding" is only the perfect coordination of the human will with the moral law. The material part, as we shall see, rapidly fades.

THE ULTIMATE

Thus we move along in the great scale of consciousness, from the vast struggle of particles,—whether those particles be within the organism of a single individual, or whether they be masses of human units in a group of nations,—up to the final reconcilement of all things, the ultimate simplicity. It is this eternal peace which men look forward to and term variously Nirvana or Utopia or the brotherhood of man, according to their environment. It is the final nothingness which inspires the idealistic Socialist to dream his dreams—the hope of the fanatic, the philosopher, the reformer, the passionate pleader for the so-called rights of man. And, like beads upon an ascending wire, in the order of

their inward tranquillity, in the order in which they have sacrificed themselves for this eternal peace, were strung the nations of the world in the Great War.

The process is always going on; it is the law of the microcosm as well as the solar system. But, like the common miracles of life, the sense of its presence is usually lost upon us. It only happens that, in what we may regard as the most dramatic period of the world's history, we have so recently been the spectators of the almost visible action of this great law. The mists were cleared away for one chronological moment, and we saw England, France, Russia, Belgium, America—each one of them an individual unit magnified millions of times—in spiritual action, their palpitating souls visibly working. It was a rare spectacle, and we must not lose the vision of it until the application has come home to each one of us.

GIVING UP!

Peace, therefore, as I have ventured to define it, is always based upon sacrifice. And what is sacrifice? Sacrifice implies the relinquishment of that which we hold most dear; it is the sloughing off of material things we have hitherto deemed indispensable; and it is a curious and interesting commentary upon human actions that sacrifice is rarely voluntary.

When sacrifice is made, it is made in obedience to a higher motive. Abraham at the command of God makes ready to sacrifice his son Isaac—but it is always at the command of God and in response to an a priori impulse emanating from the moral law within. So we sent forth our sons to battle, because that transcendent idea of eternal peace laid upon every man the stern duty. We say there can be no peace with dishonor. One has only to witness the discomfort of the so-called slacker, whom God touches with this divine wand of sacrifice and awakens him, as he struggles with the new impulse, to see that we are the victims of an inexorable fate, compelled gradually, and upon an ascending scale, to yield up our identity to a higher law.

SUFFERING

I should like to call attention to a very simple fact which may not hitherto have occurred to my readers, and yet which it only requires a little reflection and comparison to prove. And that is that we never experience the same kind of suffering twice, although the causes in succession may, so far as their outward content is concerned, be identical. Suppose a father has twin sons who have grown up together to that age when their promise of life in its highest aspects

is about to be realized, and then one of them dies. The father, to whom this grief comes as a sudden shock, and who, so to speak, is entirely untrained in this peculiar sorrow, will live through an experience which little by little, and by just so much as this experience is of value to him, lifts him up to an entirely new level of spiritual consciousness. The spirit of resignation over his loss will gradually be succeeded by a much loftier conception of God and the universe. But what, then, if the other son goes? The father will be utterly incapable of living over his former suffering. Something has happened to draw him closer to God.

The realization and understanding of this great law of discipline—that the trial, which at the time we so passionately resent, not only can never occur again in just that way, but that it must have happened once in order to secure us forever against its repetition—is by far the most important development which can come to the moral consciousness of any human being. We stand abashed before its working, like children in the presence of some great natural force, seen for the first time. And it was the innate consciousness that this great law is as good for nations as for individuals which gave the Allies the power to fight on, and bred a deep sense of eternal

peace in the hearts of those engaged in this titantic conflict.

They say, indeed, that history repeats itself. Only in its outward forms and sequences—never in its internal values. We have come to learn, out of the vast historical sweep of sorrow and bloody death, that the individual does not count, and that the eternal ideas with which God has builded his universe can only come home to us when, through constantly enforced new sacrifices, our spiritual eyesight becomes trained to the great natural features in the landscape of the moral law.

IT IS NOT ALL LOST

Is it easy for the common man to understand all this? It is not only easy, but inevitable. Be assured that for every human life sacrificed, either on the field of battle or in the depths of the ocean, the new sense of eternal liberty for all men will be strengthened. Every hero who went to his death is like a deposit in this bank of liberty, drawing eternal interest for posterity. For one thing, distinctions are leveled in astonishing ways hitherto deemed impossible. This may be difficult for some to see; but it is true.

GERMANY

Meanwhile, we Americans, taking stock of our own souls, having felt ourselves exultantly at last drawn into a world struggle because we divinely realized that it was the only way we could be at peace with ourselves—we say, What was Germany?

Who was this power of evil rising over the consciousness of the world like a hideous miasma, choking us with horror? What was, and is, Germany?

To understand Germany, we must know ourselves. It is useless to accuse her as if she were a common criminal. Out of our vocabulary comes life. Germany (as we all are) is only the inevitable outcome of a previous vocabulary. The indissoluble union of Abraham Lincoln, "of the people, for the people, by the people," is the America of to-day. The blood-and-iron rule of Bismarck resulted in the Prussia of the war. Words are corner-stones of empires. We have only to apply this law to our individual lives to see how it works. Whatever we are, we can trace back to words fixing themselves long ago as formulæ in our consciousnesses.

Now as to what we think Germany was. On the surface we say that she was Prussianized—that is, possessed of the evil spirit of militarism. We started out in 1914 with the nonchalant thought that

Germany was a bad neighbor and would, therefore, have to be disposed of. When she was not so easily disposed of as we had thought, then a great fear came into our hearts that perhaps she could not be disposed of. Germany, so far as our psychology was concerned, was like a bad habit which had all unconsciously grown upon us until we gradually waked up to the fact that unless we could conquer her, she would utterly possess us. That made us desperate, and a dual danger came over us. First, Germany, as a bad habit, was always breaking out in new places. When we thought that the ordinary horrors she offered us were surely the end of her capacity for horrors, then she offered us new ones. Rheims and Louvain were succeeded by the Zeppelin raids, to which, with a mocking satire, we attached the phrase "women and children first." And then the massing of prisoners in the front ranks, the gas attacks, the slavery of women, the murder of Edith Cavell—all the array of frightfulness—kept us occupied with new sensations.

OUR GREATEST ENEMY

Second, we began to realize that it was as much due to our own weaknesses as it was to Germany's strength that she was winning for so long against us. In short, the more we struggled to overcome Germany, the more

it became evident to us that we were struggling to overcome ourselves. And so now we begin to see, just as in the beginning we saw that the thing we called war was in reality peace—now we begin to see that the war we must ultimately win was a war not against Germany, but against ourselves. If this is not so, then we are now unconsciously preparing ourselves for another war. Consider! Germany is an illusion of the human mind. There is no Germany, as we have come to hear it said there was. There were only our own weaknesses. We have but to confront these weaknesses for a moment to understand that, if they had not been present, there would have been no war and no Germany, in the sense that we have come to believe Germany is to-day. And by "we" I mean, of course, the Allies; for I do not believe that any real American who has thought and felt the war from the beginning could have had any other idea of his country, as being apart from the struggle, however much, outwardly, he may have considered it temporarily expedient to acquiesce in a surface neutrality.

Germany, therefore, never has been, nor is she at all to-day, what we think she is. Germany is incidental to our own main purpose, which is to conquer ourselves. We have but to think of the sort of things that have been going on since the war broke

out, to realize in the gigantic world-scheme the deep necessity of Germany: conscription—income leveling—woman's work—the purification of government leadership—the awakening of the Colonies—the coming freedom of Ireland. Thus much for Britain. And consider Russia. Consider also the new nationalism that has sprung into life almost overnight in this country. It is all an impressive list. Not until the social consciousness of the world has been forced up to a new level, and this as a permanent contribution to posterity, can the thing we call Germany be conquered. That is why we are having such a hard time doing it. We ought to. It is the only way that mankind can be regenerated.

WHERE THE WEAKNESS DWELLS

Lord Roberts, for eight years calling upon Britain to prepare and hooted out of lecture-halls, was like the admonishing voice of conscience which says, "Look to yourself." Yet I repeat, for emphasis, what we must come clearly to understand is that, whether we think as a nation or as an individual, the object of our preparation is not so much to defend ourselves against a common enemy as to overcome our own weaknesses. Mere physical equipment, guns and ammunition, are of no consequence except as a pitiful symbol of

man's spiritual weakness. The call to the nations to lay down their arms, on the part of peace advocates, is like requesting the cowboys in a Western mining-camp to throw away their guns. Put one of these cowboys in Concord, and he would be ashamed to be seen with a gun. So we must create new spiritual conditions, and this can be done only through universal human sacrifices. We are likely to recoil in horror from the thought of so much destruction of life, because we overlook one simple fact. When we think of physical suffering, we think of it en masse; we see countless human beings shot to death, long lines of wounded, almost unimaginable stretches of agony. And when we think of this agony being endured, owing to a perfectly natural illusion, we think of one person bearing it all. We have, however, no moral right to do this. Each has his individual share of suffering and no more. It is quite probable that each one of us some time in our lives has had to bear as much pain as is borne by the average individual on the battle-field. I say to myself (and that is all that I have any right to say or know, because I do not actually know others) that, so far as I myself am concerned, I can bear what I have to bear. It may be hard, but I can bear it. I can die but once. If I suffer, I can suffer in the same way but once; and furthermore, my experience has taught me

that this suffering, whether it be physical or mental, is not only an illusion of my mortal self, but in the nature of things must be and is precisely what is best for me. But still greater than all this is the conviction than my own death, no matter how it may come, will not rob me of anything. On the contrary, I rejoice at the thought that, through it, there may be advance made somewhere. In short, my death, with whatever suffering may attend it, is only of consequence when it serves—that is, when, as a unit, it is added—to all the weight of suffering through which the human race may finally be redeemed. And as for a man's life, any part of it is equal to the whole.

THE REAL CONFLICT

Now if we look at the matter in this way, we shall come at last to understand the great war. We must drop its physical aspects at once—must cast them aside. What passes before our physical eyesight is nothing but the visible reflex of the clash of moral ideas that are being fought out within the human soul. We really live not in deeds, not in thought, but in moral reactions. The war means only that during a certain period in the history of the human race—say from 1914 to 1918—there came to all the great nations of the world a great moral readjust-

ment, in which it was discovered anew that only by ruthless sacrifices of certain elements within itself could the world advance a step forward in the vast chronology of human liberty. And by a singular paradox, it would seem as if this upward spiritual movement was accomplished by the sacrifice of the best. So with rigid hearts, we still mourn for the flower of the young manhood of France, Britain, and America, and, mourning, say, "Why should these have had to go?"

Yet is this not always so? Are not all of us, in our own individual battle of life, constantly under the stern necessity of relinquishing that which we have come to cherish the most? And do we not, in the light of a fuller, richer experience, come to say at last, "Lord, Thy will be done"?

It seems to me, therefore, it now ought to be plain that war can only stop on earth when we are willing to renounce the things which go to make war. We ought to understand, even if at first we see through a glass but darkly, that the source of our being, namely, our Creator, must not only know more than we do, but must have the world well in hand for his own purposes. This being so, instead of trying to invent cures of our own for what we think ought to be cured, is it not much more sensible for us to examine the

facts in the light of truth, and not assume that we know more than God?

Speaking physically, some one said that if everybody would take a bath every day, the world would be regenerated. I feel the same way about war. I see no way to stop it except for each one of us to go back to the source of his being and search himself. If each one does this, not only war will cease, but the whole material world will respond. Invention will still persist. But it will be right invention, not wrong.

In the next chapter I shall deal with man as a dream-god.

MAN THE DREAM-GOD

In this chapter the author indulges in satire and some apparently cynical reflections about the condition of society. It is intended, however,—as the reader will perceive later on,—to be merely a description of the material life of the majority of human beings, this unreality being in contrast to their real or spiritual selves.

MAN THE DREAM-GOD

EVERY man if encouraged will tell you privately that he suffers more than others. But if you accuse him of this publicly he will always deny it and declare how happy he is.

The great occupation of the majority of modern human beings is the continuous effort to conceal from others how much afraid they are. This becomes an unconscious process, and bears fruit in various forms of self-assertiveness, egotism, and in other deceptive poses. We may well exclaim, "O faithless generation!"

The whole aim of modern education is to teach us how to defend ourselves against our own civilization. And this is necessary, otherwise we should all be physically destroyed.

We create progressive forms of self-destruction, and then devise means to become immune to them. Learning to dodge traffic is not so much an art as an obligation. Motion pictures, motor-cars, sports, speculation, and telephones tend to rob us of the power of motion and intelligent speech. To offset

these influences, we invent new sports and establish standardized religions and schools of oratory.

There is small difference between a man sitting on the front seat of a motor-car and making his way through traffic, and a man sitting in his pelvic cavity and making his way through a gauntlet of modern diseases.

The social conversation of the most advanced human beings in off hours is almost exclusively devoted to remedies. To have been operated upon successfully is one of the highest badges of distinction. Voltaire said that a man at forty was either a fool or a physician. Many of us are both.

The qualities which men labor so hard to perfect are almost, if not quite, all perfected for the purpose of protecting them against imaginary dangers.

EDUCATION

A New York furrier, inspired by commercial motives, let loose a wild fox in the streets of the metropolis. In a very short time the panic-stricken animal, subjected to this hideous form of cruelty, was destroyed. If he had had the slavery-sense so highly developed among human beings, and had secreted himself in some convenient cage, he would have been admired by thousands.

Or fancy this fox first as the inmate of some "prep" school, and then a graduate from Harvard. He might thus in time become eligible as a member of the intelligentsia. Even human beings with less natural endowment have accomplished this feat.

An enterprising statistician prepares a table of educational values, to prove that a certain number of college graduates develop a higher earning capacity within a definite period than an equal number of non-graduates. Object, commercial defense.

Work, the great stabilizer and moral antiseptic, is withheld from their boys by well to do parents, until the campus complex enslaves them, and leaves them to struggle for years against the handicap of a university system which asks for nothing but cheap cynicism in return for the elaborate intellectual luxuries it provides.

FINANCE

A man who wanted to be a banker complained to a friend that the good positions were all the result of favoritism. "Then," replied the friend, "why not practise to become a favorite?" In that phrase is summed up the complete philosophy of a whole period.

Christ said:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures—"

The savings-bank slogan reads: "Save your pennies for your old age and draw interest at 4%."

Men talk about money (in all its forms), diseases, and women. Women talk about operations, clothes, and other women.

Religion is used as a narcotic to dull the mind against the thought of death. The worst thing that can be done to any man in these days is to go back of him in the dark and touch him on the shoulder.

The three most important personages in the life of a successful man are the banker, the doctor, and the undertaker.

Various methods have been devised to throttle the creative instinct. Among others may be mentioned the public schools, child labor, and standardization, of which mass production is the unclean offspring.

What is it that all men want? Answer: to understand.

The difference between knowledge and understanding is the difference between the brain and the soul. To know that 2 and 2 make 4 does not satisfy. To feel that 2 and 2 make 4 is to understand that there is something beyond the senses which makes for permanence.

The understanding of anything is the realization of

its permanence. Evil is not permanent; it is constantly shifting its base; hence it is not understood, except by the few who have taken the trouble to find out about it and who know it has no real power.

WEAKNESS

We fear what we do not understand. As we understand very little, we fear a great deal. There is nothing so weak as material power. The greater, the weaker. Material power admits nothing it cannot see. Yet the strongest man in the world cowers before the invisible microbe. A Russian Jew in Brooklyn who had saved up a small fortune in gold counted it out every night. A friend persuaded him, for safety's sake, to deposit it with a trust company. The following night he was found hanging to a lamp-post. He could not see it. He thought he had lost it. And yet every fear is a shadow.

THIS IS A DETOUR

Are these sentences I have just written, briefly descriptive of the glittering and deceptive surface of our material life in this fair America—the richest,

most progressive, and most altruistic country in the world—too cynical and too unfair? If so, let us sit down in more sober judgment, and consider our assets also. We must not grow morbid or take to brooding, or our purpose will be defeated.

The first question which in honor we must ask ourselves is, What are we trying to make of our country, out of the world, and out of ourselves? Are we really trying to make a better place to live in? And if so, what sort of a better place, and for whom? Ourselves, or posterity?

It is quite certain that our forebears suffered many hardships and privations. It is quite certain that they shed their blood freely on many battlefields that this Union might be preserved and we might enjoy the fruits thereof. It is equally certain that beneath the glittering surfaces I write of, men and women are to-day making as many sacrifices, if not more, than during any previous period in history. This is true all over the world. There are giants to-day as in those days of old. Never before, it is probable, have there been gathered together in one country so many men and women inspired by such noble purposes. And this is not all. There is among us a keen and constantly growing spiritual discernment.

WE ARE NOT ON TRIAL

In one of his campaign speeches, an unsuccessful candidate for the Presidency made the unfortunate remark that we were on trial before the world. He spoke of the League of Nations. Yet the reverse is true. We were certainly not on trial before the world when we sent our men by millions and our money by millions to win the war in Europe. We are, in point of fact, no more on trial before the world than the world is on trial before us.

And humanity is not on trial in its spirit, but in its body. These material things I write of are the things that have fastened themselves upon us.[1] They are delusions, but unless we face them boldly and understand them, they bid fair to destroy us. I doubt not the outcome.

Fear is a delusion. But it is still fear. The real answer to the question, What are we trying to make out of our country, the world, and ourselves? is this:

[1] For an extremely interesting analysis and lucid explanation of how our sense impressions have gradually swamped our real selves, see "The Evolution of Man" by G. Elliot Smith (Oxford). Professor Smith writes: "The range of true judgment is in fact extremely limited in the vast majority of human beings. Emotions and the unconscious influence of the environment in which an individual has grown up play an enormous part in all his decisions, even though he may give a rational explanation of the motives for many of his actions without realizing that they were inspired by causes utterly alien to those which he has given. . . ."

We are trying to make a better abiding-place for our spirits, and not for our bodies. So far as our bodily comfort is concerned, undoubtedly we seem to be better off than we were. But confronted as we are by the grim specter of war, is the price we are paying too great? What I am trying to make plain—and indeed it is no easy task—is that if we go out exclusively for material benefits, for greater ease without considering our souls, we shall destroy ourselves. War will destroy us. Therefore we must take account of stock; we must face the facts squarely; we must not shrink from holding this mirror of materialism up to ourselves. We shall see jazz, vulgarity, sexual perversion, crime, laxity, low political standards. They are horrible delusions, but they will remain if we encourage them to stay, if we do not understand that they are with us not to make us happier, but to destroy us. With increased spiritual discernment, they will vanish, and in their place will come a new materialism, which will be the servant and not the master of Man. Let us now go on with our indictment.

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

One of the most destructive delusions in the world is a developed sense of responsibility. "Passing the

buck," a slang phrase indicative of certain practices and applied to political and business life, can be traced back to families. Here we have a tragic misrepresentation, the cause of more actual disturbance than anything else which could be named. For it is assumed that the trouble comes from the passing of the responsibility from one member of the family to the other, whereas the real weakness lies at the other end,—in the acquiescence in and acceptance of the responsibility by one member. Parents are not responsible for the conduct of their children—only for the conditions they make. But they think they can escape the responsibility for their own conduct. The head of a family has nothing whatever to do with the acts of other members, but only his own. A man controls his family only in proportion as he controls himself. If he is in trouble and will give half the examination to himself that he would give to his business, he will invariably find that the trouble can be traced back to his own weakness. Perhaps in a moment of prosperity he has yielded to demands. When others find that at certain periods they are actually invited to impose upon one, they naturally resent it later when one refuses to be imposed upon. A father is afraid to tell his son why he does n't go to church, and then worries secretly over his responsibility in trying to make his son go. He argues

that it may not be necessary for him, but is for the boy. The boy will not go, and the father blames him. He has indulged himself in not going. His trouble is with himself, not the boy. Parents thus, by reverse methods, spoil their children, husbands their wives, and vice versa. As for the invariable one who does the work of the others, the household martyr, he is thus not the strongest, but the weakest. If he suffers, it is because he deserves to. He is guilty in the eyes of the moral law.

The Emperor Augustus, the most powerful monarch in the known world, had the power of life and death over all his subjects, including his own family. Yet he had no influence at all over his children and grandchildren. He could not change them.

Christ said:

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

If we may judge from observation, most men prefer to remain impure and not see God.

THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR

Those who occupy their minds with the thought of their own possessions gradually become blind to

everything else. They yield to this not because they are afraid for themselves, as for those dependent upon them. This false sense of responsibility blinds them to the fact that God takes care of others, no matter how close to one they are. Also, when a man throws off the care of others, in all their actions, upon God, this releases him from so much anxiety that his ability to take care of them increases in proportion. This is the moral law. Whatever influence you have over others is only through the force of silent example.

The fear which most men have of not being taken care of in their old age is likewise due to this false sense of responsibility. Instead of laying up treasures for this contingency, a man should train himself to be useful in some manner even if this occupation be a humble one. A rich, useless man in his old age is a torment to himself and all of his associates. In two or three years he may thus undo all the good of a lifetime. Early in life, along with his chief money-making, let him cultivate a hobby which will give him sufficient skill when old to feel that he is still of importance. It may be farming or writing. An old man requires very little support. There are any number of occupations which will provide for this. An old man's advice in certain

fields in which he has studied all his life is often very valuable.

Christ said:

"Take no anxious thought for the morrow."

THE INTELLECT—A WEAK SISTER

The business of philosophy, theology, and the higher criticism is to invent new terms for old falsehoods, in order to give them new plausibility. We are highly sophisticated. If Christ had come at any other moment of the world's history, it is doubtful if his message would have been carried on.

We loudly proclaim the intellect as our only guide, and constantly discard its conclusions for new ones. In Independence Hall, Philadelphia, is a case of knives once used for bleeding purposes—regarded now as historical curiosities.

At one time it was declared that the sun revolved around the earth, and matter was ponderable. Then it was declared that the earth revolved around the sun. Now it is stated that nothing revolves around anything, that all things are relative and there is no such thing as time, space, or matter. Albert Einstein, inventor of relativity, got into a dispute with a Berlin tram conductor about the change in his tram fare. The conductor remarked, "You are weak at

arithmetic." The conductor was right. Professor Einstein, however, was no worse than the rest of us.

The methods of the mystic and the scientist are identical. Each creates an hypothesis and then attempts to prove it. The scientist presents the facts deduced to his fellow-scientists with his formula and they hail him as chief; a minority, however, being against him. The mystic says, "Do as I have done and you will believe as I believe."

The mathematicians have reduced the world to a symbolic trinity. So have the theologians. Language was invented to make men inarticulate.

A TYPE

A typical successful householder is a man with a wife and two children who lives in a house that cost from $18,000 to $30,000, is worth all told from $30,000 to $100,000, and has a combined earned and unearned income of say $15,000 a year. He represents a small, but important, minority (about 250,000 in a population of 100,000,000), but his importance consists in the fact that through him, or those dependent upon him, flow so many of the destructive, but so-called civilizing, influences. This is due to his material buying-power. He is constantly beset by members of his family to buy more,

and is a prey to his own desire to add to whatever possessions he is temperamentally inclined to buy for himself. At the same time, he is held back by fear of the consequences. This keeps him whipsawed between desire on one hand and fear on the other. He rises in the morning and immediately scans the paper for market reports, although on the previous afternoon he has bought the late editions and knows precisely what these reports are. If "conditions" are good, he is afraid of his wife and children—afraid that they will discover by his manner that he is prosperous, so he gradually becomes secretive. His face in repose invariably tells his story. If he smokes, he is constantly wondering whether it is too much. Fed through the newspapers with constant reports of new diseases, and likewise terrorized by countless suggestions from his solicitous wife and friends, he is the victim of a continuous stream of anxieties, which buzz about him like gnats or expand to the proportion of dragons. Meanwhile, the merchants of pleasure and other modern industries, knowing there is sure money to be made out of his terrors, big and little, lure him with transient joys which afford him temporary relief—and otherwise sell him what other forms of immunity they have to lessen his discomfort. His false sense of responsibility grows with the increase in his pos-

sessions, and every added day brings him so much nearer to death, thus increasing his bondage to the doctors. This gloomy, but quite accurate, picture is, however, relieved by one bright spot. Kind Providence presents him with the priceless illusion that he is the only sufferer in his class—that all the others are better off than he is. Thus his pride is stimulated, and bolsters up his courage to keep up the bluff. By sheer force of being shamed into it, he maintains an outward show of cheerfulness, declares that he is feeling "fine," and thus, himself, serves as a sample illusion to his fellow-sufferers. All this constitutes what may be termed the perfect circle of hypocrisy, in which each, for appearance's sake, is patting himself on the back before all the others.

Christ said:

"A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

This means that, although the spiritual love we bear to those near and dear to us never lapses, we are at war with their false, material selves, just as we are at war with our own.

WHEN WE SEE MORE CLEARLY

During a panic, however, in which all are concerned, and concealment is no longer a matter of personal vanity, the veil is at once torn aside and

everybody glories in the common misfortune, those who lose the most being held up as heroes. It is during these periods, or shortly succeeding, that epidemics come, like the plague in Athens and London or the "flu" after our own big recent war. Mankind thereafter gradually takes on the veil again.

Money-Sex-Intellect is the three-headed Moloch of modern civilization. Men secretly distrust the latter, but worship because they believe that through it is the only way they can secure the favor of the other two. Compared with this triple-riveted combine, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil of St. Paul were tyros.

All men know what the truth is, but they are afraid to proclaim it for fear it might become universal and put them out of business. Men do not desire happiness. They deliberately attach themselves to anxiety as an antidote.

Christ said:

"My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

THE TRUE RICHES OF THE POOR

Those in more reduced circumstances than the type of man I have limned,—all the way down to the "masses," who live close to the pauper line,—are generally more tranquil and stable and resigned

under their sorrows. They hang together more. They are more unselfish. The abnormal craving for material things does not bother them so much. Also, they are more truly spiritual; they depend more upon Love. Their religion, as foolish as it seems to the intellectual, is more reliable, more real. They lean more upon God, in whom they are more apt to believe and to trust. There are exceptions to this; but even the criminals who spring from the masses are not so offensive in their aspects as the criminals who spring from the classes. Their sins are more innocent, their blindness more excusable. Thus Christ must have written on the ground. Give these people leisure, however, and they take on the base atmosphere of intellect and rapidly degenerate.

POSSESSIONS

Many kinds of intellectual, or semi-intellectual, occupations are of doubtful permanent value in comparison with the spiritual outlook which always follows a more complete detachment from material things. It is doubtful indeed if the erection of beautiful show houses with formal gardens, as beautiful as they may be, does not limit instead of expanding.

To get the most out of life, even from a severely practical standpoint, one must constantly preserve the

attitude of a sojourner in a dazzling picture-world of God's making, without responsibility or personal covetousness, in order to understand the transcendent beauty of the universe. This certainly cannot be done—or can be done only in part—when one is groping about in the dark, carrying the world on his shoulders like Atlas, afraid of his shadow, engrossed with secret care, and filled with a transient conceit over the cheap glory of ownership for something which another man has made. What we term art, if it is anything at all, is a reflection of God. Why not go to the source and live in Nature, where all things are free? To be released from the bondage I have suggested is to step into a wonder world of both spiritual and intellectual delight.

So far as alleged intelligence is concerned,—that is, that sort of intelligence which is the product of education (culture),—one is inclined to hope that people of this class will take the trouble to search themselves and discover, if possible, some means of relief from the agony and sweat of life. Yet the greatest thinkers have been the most lamentable failures, so far as any art of living is concerned—so rare is it, indeed, to find intelligence among the educated!

Socrates apparently was helpless in contact with his wife. He joked about her, this being the favorite

method employed by those who are failures in any one respect. Yet if there is anything at all to the art of living, having trouble with one's wife is not a joke—it is an acknowledgement of failure in one of the most important branches of life. Great scientists have been known to take all kinds of cheap remedies. A history of the domestic lives of philosophers and great men would disclose a pathetic trail of wreckage.

Christ said:

"It is the spirit that quickeneth."

WHY DON'T WE THINK OF THIS MORE?

If anything is more important than a science of right living, what is it? In some aspect or another, is it not a subject that takes up practically all the space in our current literature and newspapers? Domestic economy in all its forms, business, stocks and bonds, real estate, transportation, medicine, doctors, ailments and cures, art, literature and music —what is the increasing repetition of all these things but overwhelming evidence that everybody is passionately desirous of getting something out of life? Yet the moment we investigate any method of relief, be it pleasure, healing, investment, travel, or any one of the thousand contraptions advertised, we know

that behind it is the commercial motive, controlled by cold-blooded, grasping, and experienced actors, made supernormally cunning by the size of the stakes—all out to exploit us. Our sentiments and emotions, our psychology, our temperaments, the amount of pigment we may have in our skins, the color of our eyes and hair, our passions, our sex-impulses—all these various things, and more, are coolly and mercilessly appraised by trained bands of high-salaried gentlemen who sit invisible behind mahogany railings and agitate the machinery which so skilfully separates us from our hard-earned wealth. Indeed, we, the victims of this vast system, are probably ourselves also playing the game in other ways, thus gathering from our own circle of "prospects" the wherewithal to be victimized.

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND OF MATTER

Into this maelstrom of materialism, with its shameless extravagance, its gross vulgarity, its indecent exposure of everything rotten, no gleam of beauty penetrates, no ray of spiritual purpose enters. In the whole history of mankind, no more destructive race of people than the Americans have ever existed. Gorged with natural resources, we chop down our forests to make paper in which to exploit the putrid

tendencies of a society constantly growing more decadent. Blind consumers of coal, oil, and food, we sacrifice our children in factories, mills, and field, laugh at our slums, boast that we encourage more crime than any other nation, and when we deprecate the ten million illiterates we have allowed to "matriculate" among us, do so mainly because their illiteracy prevents them from becoming buyers. Is this picture overdrawn? Read the answer in the newspapers.

We have as much, if not more, natural beauty than any other country in the world. Among us is a great talent for artistic achievement of every sort; yet we permit a small band of intellectuals to feed us with the offscourings of European culture, while at the same time they sneer at the country that supports them. No fashionable girls' school can employ native musical talent. Parents who wish their girls accomplished will not patronize schools that do not have European teachers.

There is really no way of finding out about America except by examining it for yourself. We delude ourselves with the belief that we are getting information from writers, when all that any writer can do is to disclose his own thoughts. The historian who writes that America was discovered by Columbus, or the biologist that we once went about with tails—

these men are merely telling us what they think. That which we term knowledge is that which is unknown.

WHAT IS REPUTATION?

The moment a man acquires a reputation for anything he is confined within the limits of that reputation. A reputation is a fence that the owner builds around himself. Even an ass has followers, and cannot depart from being one without being ridiculed by outsiders. His tendency to remain an ass becomes more fixed as time goes on.

No reliance can be placed upon people with reputations,—so-called specialists or experts,—because they are, in advance, committed to a program, and either a natural pride, or—what is much more important—their living, depends upon their sticking to their lasts. The strain of material existence is so great that all the various traits men display, such as politeness, dignity, courage, cheerfulness, etc., are developed by this necessity, according to temperament. Each is merely a perfected form of self-protection. A crusty exterior generally conceals genuine merit of some sort.

We are all *Red-riding-hoods.* We constantly throw ourselves on *Grandmother Wolf* for shelter.

WHAT IS PERSONALITY

The subject of personality has never been properly probed except by the psychologists, whose ignorance increases in proportion to their advancement. Just as the body is sustained by food and drink, and without these would perish, so the person himself, whatever his intellect or judgment or will or identity may be, is fed from unknown sources. All other people are thus as unreal as ourselves. We know nothing about either. People are phenomena, composed of tissue, which is in turn a form of matter, and matter is non-existent. Yet behind these masks we know there is something more. Everybody knows that, but nobody takes the trouble to understand it.

Christ said:

"Seek and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

All that we know is, apparently, that we are able to feel something which we have reason to believe an ant, for example, can not feel. It is precisely this which separates us from our material selves. We don't believe an ant either knows, or even suspects, what is going on outside of his beat. He is not aware of us, or of anything else beyond his natural

instincts. But we seem to have gone a little farther than that in the scale of evolution, in so far as we suspect that there is something beyond our senses. Particularly is this true when we come to examine our senses, and discover that they are so unreliable. That we are able thus to examine them seems to prove to us that there must be something in us which, like a judge, looks down upon self in the arena and thus holds it up to analysis.

But the moment we enter upon this independent investigation, firmly resolved to act for ourselves, to take nobody's word, a thousand things seem to rise up in front to prevent us. In the beginning of our bewilderments and uncertainties, we are told by some one who seems very real to us, that introspection is bad, too much thinking will drive us mad. Public opinion thus scares us, and we are switched away from our inquiry, the pursuit of which might lead to understanding. This sense of indecision is immeasurably increased by the voices of a legion of hawkers, who offer us remedies for every ill under the sun—always at a price. I know people who all their lives have so fallen into the habit of being cured of something or other, that finally this has become their chief occupation. Said Christ:

"Ye shall know them by their fruits."

INFERIORITY

The process of belittling, to which we are constantly subjected in our endeavors to make ourselves better, is a particular manifestation of the general rule of destruction. And just as others belittle our successes, so we, generally quite unconsciously, belittle theirs. And this rule of destruction is just as active for ourselves, being defined by the psychoanalysts and bred up as the inferiority complex. Thus what we think runs out into voids, whirlpools of chaos. The most disgusting trait in human nature, judging by the results, is this base spirit of submission, this yielding to the critics. There is small actual, practical difference between the cruelty shown by religious fanatics toward their own bodies, and cruelty displayed toward others. Both spring from hidden sexual sources. In many countries women derive satisfaction from flagellation. Many spiritual exercises and other similar forms of penance, such as lying on thorns, wearing hair shirts etc., are perverted forms of sexual restlessness, seeking sublimation.

We often wonder why it is that such fine-looking people about us—dignified and ministerial waiters, noble barbers, courtly hotel clerks, and even butlers

with faces like Daniel Webster—should so often be engaged in menial occupations. Not that these occupations are ignoble, because in many respects they may be more truly dignified and God-given than the occupations of bankers and brokers and other gentry. It is not that; it is only that we see on the frequently lofty faces of the masses the hall-mark of submission. They are spiritually cowed; there is no fight in them. These men, like all other men mostly, make good soldiers. But physical and moral courage are quite different. Thus countless men bow down before the graven images they erect in their employer or in their own household, in the shape of wife or children.

Said Christ:

"Who is my mother or my brethren?"

Thus, when others belittle us, or we belittle ourselves, we submit to falsities, we turn tail and run. It is all so tragically pathetic, because so unnecessary.

THE INDIVIDUAL

This Eliza-crossing-the-ice method is shown by the faces and actions of the large company who practise it. Take any human being in his own home,—or lair,—and study him there freely and disinterestedly, and you will find that in all respects he is precisely

like a cunning animal. These facts must show us that we can depend only upon our individual selves. In fact, there is nobody else. This truth is borne out by the glimpses we get of the thoughts of others. If we examine the statements made by scientists, we get from them not only a note of despair at the solid wall confronting them, but also the invariable conclusion that after all the balances have been checked up and brought over, we ourselves are the final judges. All things are relative, declares Einstein. For whom? For the individual alone. I, the individual, am the center of the universe. Nobody else can teach me anything I cannot learn for myself. I am a conscious part of everything. All things move about me, and I am the sole judge. Thus, if any man comes up to me and tries to befuddle me with a show of learning, or any other hocus-pocus, my answer is that my mind is as good as his. I cannot recognize his special claim. The evolutionist is invariably defeated by his own testimony, and not having had the time or the temperament to nurture a sense of humor, he has not the slightest realization of the huge satire involved in his position. Evolutionists trace the so-called history of evolution of man from the remotest times up to the alleged present showing quite cleverly that the whole system of articulate speech has been slowly built up like a huge

web of illusion; that, so to speak, it is a house of cards built upon sand. The proof lies in the conflicting theories of all eminent thinkers. Their innocence is shown by the fact that they think it only necessary to deny what they don't believe, to make it true. Scratch a philosopher, and you find a monkey. If there is nothing else to depend upon but all that, in our own thought about ourselves, we must then logically revert to the most complete animalism, we must throw up our hands and admit that there is nothing real but what we can see and feel, that indeed, we are nothing better than a larger form of ant.

THE SPECIALISTS

Tell representatives of the intellect and culture —philosophers, scientists, biologists, essayists, popular inspirational writers, theologians, etc.—that they are all ignorant, and they become mad as hornets. Indeed, their rage is so great that it frequently makes them inarticulate, and for purposes of defense, they simulate the loftiest contempt. The layman is *persona non grata* in any court of specialists. Yet any one of these specialists, in any branch of thought, can be convicted out of hand on his own evidence in half an hour.

Go to any library, get the best biology they have,

and somewhere in it you will catch the author admitting that he does n't know anything. This admission may be tucked away in a quiet paragraph, but it is always there.

THEY ALL THROW UP THEIR HANDS

Even at the risk of trying the patience and shaming the intelligence of my already overburdened reader, I yield to temptation in reproducing the following quotations, taken at random from my own library.

It is much easier to show that a certain event has taken place than to explain why it has taken place.

It must be admitted that when we have accounted for the origin of anything by the theory of natural selection we have only made the first step in the direction of a full and causal explanation.

. . . there has been revealed no clue as to what causes variations to arise.

From "Studies in Evolution and Eugenics" by S. J. Holmes, Professor of Zoology in the University of California (Harcourt).

It is contrary to philosophy and to ordinary experience to believe that man can come near exhausting the reality of any order of facts by scientific methods only.

From "The Control of Life" by J. Arthur Thomson, M.A., LL.D. (Holt).

Many men of science, following Mach and Karl Pearson, have affirmed that science can never explain more than "how" events occur: it can never touch the problem of "why" they occur.

From "Modern Science and Materialism" by Hugh Elliott (Longmans).

Evolution means to me only *part* and not *all* of an explanation of these things . . . it does not explain to me, in any ultimate way, the fact that there are living creatures or an earth. Or that I have a consciousness of myself and of my relations to the other living things of the earth.

From "Evolution" by Vernon Kellogg (Appleton).

Evolutionism, in spite of its appeals to particular scientific facts, fails to be a truly scientific philosophy because of its slavery to time, its ethical preoccupations, and its predominant interest in our mundane concerns and destiny.

From "Mysticism and Logic" by Bertrand Russell (Longmans).

Is there not justification for the view so often expressed of late that man is never free and that responsibility and duty are mere delusions?

From "Heredity and Environment" by Edwin G. Conklin of Princeton University.

Have we, on the whole, arrived, or are we only on the way, or mayhap just starting?

From "The Mind in the Making" by James Harvey Robinson (Harper).

Consider the notorious differences which, within my

own recollection, have divided thinkers of the first rank in the English-speaking world.

From "Theism and Thought" by Arthur James Balfour (Doran).

These random quotations, revealing the doubt and confusion which exist to-day among the representatives of the intellect, could be indefinitely extended. No wonder the man in the street—who has just as much right as any one to share in whatever there may be—is driven away to any humbug offered. Yet is it not perfectly simple that if there is a Creator who must necessarily transcend our senses, he must also furnish us with a means to approach him? And does it not at least seem reasonable to suppose that he will naturally expect us to do this work ourselves, and not leave it to others?

THE CRITIC

As for the critics, get behind the scenes with them, and you will invariably discover that this is the thing they are doing to make a living, and the reputations they acquire for criticism are privately regarded as a business asset. It is an easy game, once the rudiments are learned. One has but to damn everything. I have studied these gentlemen too closely in their haunts not to know that their main idea is to make

a decent or indecent living. There is no objection to this. The objection enters when we know they are trying to convey the impression of lofty thinking for art's sake. Very few know, or care, what the truth is. If by hook or crook you can produce a fair imitation of it, you can easily make a good living, in a world where humbug is one of the recognized deities.

MORE ABOUT PERSONALITY

As for personality in general,—and by this I mean specifically the personality of all others to whom we are attached or with whom we come into contact,—one of the most difficult things for us to understand is exactly what personality means.

Our inevitable tendency is to separate each personality from all others and, by surrounding it and investing it with a thousand or more associations, to give it a specific identity of its own. All these personalities with whom we are (apparently) surrounded vary in their intensity and interest for us in proportion as we are tied up to them by sex instinct, love, affection, intellect, and so on. We often bow down to them and worship them as false gods, making sacrifices to them, and placating them, espe-

cially if they happen to be in our own families. We cannot, except by spiritual training, separate the real personalities from the false personalities in those who are near to us. We allow them to badger us, to drain us of our resources, to frighten us in all sorts of ways, and when we suffer the consequences, we blame them, when we ought to blame our own ignorance in not understanding them.

The people we see about us in crowds we see as a whole—en masse. If one of them has some trick of costume or feature that makes him stand out from the others, we note him with curiosity and mild amusement. If we then come to know him, his various individual tricks and traits of temperament become stamped upon our consciousnesses much as we read a book, except that the book, for us, has an end and this person has not. We are constantly revising our opinion about him. We do not perceive that he has no reality in respect of all these things, and that his actual self lies under them, invisible, spiritual. It is this fact, of course, which enables us to communicate with him at all. Husbands and wives, if properly mated, thus become more tolerant of each other all the time, because this constant process of revision breeds cautiousness in rendering judgments.

NARCISSUS UP TO DATE

The best instance of this whole process is your own material self, for this material self, strange as this seems, is in the same general class with all these other varying personalities. It is often worshiped in the same manner. When we consider the constant sacrifices people are making to themselves, bowing down before their own physical desires, absorbed in the daily routine of self, the subject, for contemplation, is by far too horrible to be attractive. And this self of unreality, which seems so real, is constantly surprising you. It is like a fish you are trying to land, constantly running away with the line, lying dead on you, and then jumping clear out of the water. And you never quite land it. At least, not here.

The process of petting one's own body as if it were an imported pekingese or chow, is seen at its best in some of the haunts of the hell-ridden idle rich, where fat ladies bow down daily and hourly to the fleshly monuments they have created out of themselves—an ever recurring form of pearl-chain-gang slavery.

It is because we are different, or quite separate, from what we think we are in our dream, that we know anything at all. The act of knowing, in itself, is based on contrast—on the thing which is known—

that is to say, which one is aware of—and the one who knows.

The one who knows, or who seeks constantly to know, is our immortal self, and this self is distinguished from the world we live in, and from our other material self, as light is from darkness.

THE REAL SELF

There can be but one self, because everything we know or feel is, or must be, from the standpoint of that one self. Once this is understood, all becomes clear. We then come to see, quite simply and easily, not only that we ourselves are ONE, but that personality, indeed, is just a useful word which covers most of the so-called ills that flesh is heir to. It stands vaguely for the crowd, and it stands specifically for acquaintances, friends, business and professional associates, family, loved ones, self, and God; for the God that people talk about and sing about in churches is man made, nothing but a form of personality. This God is worshiped by most men—if they think about him at all—much as one worships one's wife: some one to be feared, placated, cajoled, prayed to, argued with, supported by give-till-it-hurts contributions, and, when necessary, treated with the low, smug cunning for which the

Anglo-Saxon race has achieved such a notable distinction.

This combination of sentimentality and cowardice, which compels us to worship so many forms of personality, seems to be an inheritance handed down to us by the cringing consciousness of the Jew, from whom we have inherited most of our spiritual vocabulary. Thus we bow down to and worship these various modern personalities as gods. Parents spoil their children, husbands spoil their wives, congregations spoil their clergymen. Every working woman capable of making her living has one or more parasitical relatives and incompetents hanging on to her like vampires, and frightening her into self-destruction by accusations of being untrue to her duty. Millionaires who give large sums to institutions are hailed as benefactors of the race. Groups of women standardize their sexual emotions under the name of welfare, or individualize them according to well-known formulæ for screen purposes.

Christ said:

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart—"

We think in terms of yesterday. The Bible is the reservoir from which for generations our best writers have drawn the streams of our thought. Therefore the Bible is the background of our spiritual consciousness.

WHO REALLY THINKS?

There is no such thing as thinking in the ordinary meaning of that term. We originate nothing. We serve as radio centers, through which move the spiritual forces of the Universe. Our bodies begin to die the moment we are born. Doctors all their lives are trying to cure corpses, and don't know it. We seem to select, but even that is an illusion. Our activities are chemical reactions, which occur from unknown motives. Among our writers there are, for instance, various vocabulary planes, or levels. On lower levels, writers depend on platitudes and clichés—stock phrases. On higher levels, writers are nicer in their sense of contrast. Writing is then proudly considered an art, and those who practise it—the stylists—look down with contempt upon the poor devils who lean on platitudes. In all cases, however, writers draw their vocabularies from a common stock, and their form, or technic, likewise de-

pends entirely upon the sources from which they draw their taste, culture, talent, or genius. They are the conduits through which flow the invisible current from the unknown, and become manifested in terms of expression—some more enduring than others, but all doomed to die. Homer and Shakespeare will thus eventually vanish, along with the last set of newspaper head-lines. The only reason we can communicate at all is because there is nothing original in any of us. If there were, it would be incommunicable.

Christ said:

"Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay."

THE MAN WITH AN OPINION

The most ridiculous object in the world is the man with an opinion.

The arguments we use to justify our opinions, or beliefs, are just as ridiculous as the beliefs themselves. The stock reply to the argument against vivisection is, "Is n't my child's life of more value than the life of a dog?" The true answer is, "No!" The practical results of vivisection, or, on the other hand, the manifest abuses, are not brought here into question. It is sufficient to say that our whole system of material civilization is on the defensive when

able and sincere men are compelled to resort to methods which they justify on the ground of immediacy. The feelings of any parent are of no consequence when a permanent principle is involved, and it is the cheapest and most ignorant philosophy which drags in the child as justification. No parent, during the war, was heard to exclaim, "It is better that Germany should conquer the world than that I should lose my child." Yet afterward it appeared that it might have been better. Some say Germany won the war after all. Others say that our last state was worse than the first. These ephemeral and shifting beliefs, this babel of opinion, is due to the universal darkness in which men's minds grope. Abraham understood when he started to sacrifice his son Isaac. In our modern civilization he would have been thrown into jail as a child murderer; or if a surgeon had been called in, that gentleman would have promptly produced some sort of animal to be sacrificed in place of Isaac. We may say that this Bible story never happened. It happened as certainly as that everything we think is real is unreal, and everything we think is unreal is real. If Abraham, in common with modern parents, had placed his child first, before the command of God, he would then have been worshiping a false god in the shape of Isaac, precisely as we all do to-day in the personalities of our wives and

children and the various other denominational deities we personify under the general title of God.

Christ said:

"I have overcome the world."

He meant that he understood at last the nothingness of all that vast network of illusion which we call the world.

The intellect, more than anything else, is used as a mask to hide the spiritual ignorance of the learned.

Art, whether it be expressed in terms of literature, drama, music, painting, or sculpture, is a similar illusion. When any man talks about "my art," he is holding up his personality as a graven image.

Are we here then to dismiss all this life we are living in—mice, maggots and men—as a dream, a chimera of the consciousness? Certainly. Christ said:

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

WHO SHALL BE LAST OVER THE FENCE?

The great majority of men and women—humanity, dreamers, those whom Omar curtly classifies as "shadow shapes"—do not want to talk and certainly do not want to think about these things. They duck.

The materially successful, who have entrenched themselves behind rampants of money, dismiss any suggestion of introspection as so much "bunk." They buy their religion, just as they do their legal and medical protection, with hard cash. This, for temporary purposes, is a comfortable evasion, and their argument is unanswerable. A dollar cannot be refuted. Said Christ:

"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

These off-hand people, whose coffers are full, pass their time worshiping at the various shrines of the false idols they have erected, their secret fears being locked up in the dark Bastille of their consciousnesses until on a day the revolution comes. Every pampered intellect supports its Louis XV, to be succeeded by the Reign of Terror. "After us the deluge."

Insouciance is the rubric of the intellectuals. Intimately deferential among themselves, they dismiss all laymen with complacent silence. Einstein is reported to have said there were only twelve men in the world who understood his theory of relativity. A conservative estimate. His attitude toward his predecessor Newton is expressed by the words, "After you, Alphonse." Edison, they say, invented the electric light. But who invented Edison?

A leading mathematician first declares that our

only possible method of reasoning must be with the means provided by the senses. He then repudiates the reliability of the senses; whereupon a leading philosopher rebukes him for inconsistency, but leaves the question up in the air as to what we really are to do in a case like this.

MATERIALISM TO THE BAR

It does, indeed, seem to be a serious case. The truth is that materialism is constantly pleading guilty on its own count. Human beings all about us are constantly losing what is popularly, if mistakenly, considered our most precious possession, namely, our lives, on grade crossings. We are being smashed up in various other ways because the things we see are not what we think they are. Indeed, our skill in keeping ourselves alive as long as we do is incredible, considering the risks run. Yet we continually evoke the blessings of Peace, which, as I have stated, exacts more lives than war. On the one hand we hold life cheaper than dirt, as witness our leniency towards criminals, our exploitation of children in cotton-fields, mills, and factories, our grade crossings, our mines and underground toilers, while on the other hand our newspapers are filled with the latest cures

of medical science, glowing accounts of the lowering of the death-rate, while healers and manipulators and nostrum hawkers of every shade of mendacity flourish like green bay-trees.

Confronted everywhere by so many conflicting voices and theories, while at the same time they are absorbed by the problem of how to protect themselves from all the dangers surrounding them, is it any wonder that men grow discouraged and refuse either to talk or think about the thing which has come to be known as the Unknown? Thus, among Americans, has developed what is classified as the "hard-boiled" attitude, which is as much as to say: "Don't bother me; I can take my medicine. I 'm a good sport; but I 'm not talking about it."

THE HARD-BOILED EGG

There is not only much to be said in favor of this attitude from the inside, but, if we can imagine a benevolent and tolerant, but at the same time just and exacting, God looking down on this world, we can easily fancy him entertaining more genuine respect for the hard-boiled egg than for any other kind of citizen. The hard-boiled egg is conserving his energies to preserve his own material identity and to

keep himself alive in the best manner possible. If everybody else would do the same, a large part of our troubles would cease. He is under no illusion about his fate. He is here to make the most out of life while it lasts and to pass out with his boots on. The hard-boiled egg, under his shell, is serenely tolerant of the intellectuals, the sentimentalists, and the pious people. If they can extract comfort from their various activities, let them do so. As for him, he is a sincere worker, playing his cards close to his eyelids, and envying no man. If all this in itself is only another pose, at least it is not the pose of the parasite.

In reality it is the pose of the fatalist, the stoic, the gentleman gambler. The certainty that some one or something will at some time get you, is accepted as so inevitable that it is folly to waste any time over it. The more time spent in dwelling on it, the worse it will be. But these are the men who, so far as this material world is concerned, carry it along on their shoulders. These are the men who, quick on the trigger, carry their nerve with them, shoulder great enterprises, and keep things going! They are not necessarily materialists. They support themselves, and ask no odds. God selects unconscious agents to do his greatest work, and not always those who patter from pulpits, write dull books on ethics, or evolve new systems of philosophy.

A DREAM WORLD

The great mistake they all make, however, no matter whether they be hard-boiled eggs or sob-sisters, highbrows, lowbrows or middle-brows, is to take the world we live in too seriously, to assume that it exists when it does n't. They believe that what they know is true, whereas everything known is untrue. They think the world is real when it is n't, and thus they fall into the most curious and astonishing paradoxes.

It was a sad satire on science when matter, the laboratory deity so long bowed down to and worshiped, was declared by the same scientists to be nothing but electrons, and that a tree or a woman, an elephant or a mountain, a palace or a hovel, were so many combinations of nothingness which, in their own inevitable terms, could only be defined by their respective places in the atomic scale. A solid two-inch cube of iron, as one expert points out, which if it hit a man, would kill him, expanded to the size of an ordinary room would be invisible—no more than a thin vapor. We could move about in it and never know. Most people, of course, are quite incapable of grasping this thought, because, like the men in Plato's cave, they are immersed in darkness.

We should not any of us understand it if we were something other than what we think we are. The

whole problem can be focused down to this question, as propounded by the philosophers:

If our only means of knowing anything at all is through the senses, that is to say, by means of the symbolic vocabulary which is based altogether on sense perception, then how is it possible to prove that anything is valid beyond the senses?

The answer is simple.

Try it and see for yourself. Accept no substitutes. Lean on no other.

DO AS THE SCIENTISTS DO

Start out frankly with the hypothesis that there is a God. In this you are following the only method known, either by religionists or scientists, to arrive at any conclusion whatsoever.

In making this hypothesis, it must be remembered that the God thus laid down as the unknown quantity must be actually an unknown quantity. He must be not such a god as man has built up out of sense perceptions; but a genuine unknown God—a source, a creator, as I have stated. Cast aside utterly and completely the world and everything in it, and by yourself alone face the unknown creator, and calmly wait results.

In a short time, if you are genuinely sincere, if

you are in such despair that you are honestly willing to try anything, you will be able to laugh all the philosophers and theologians in the world to scorn. You will be literally out of bondage—the way will be shown you. You will come to learn that while it is not always easy, while at times the world is completely wrapped in darkness, you will find that the light always breaks in at the right moment, and that there is no other way.

Christ said:

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Only the unknown is real.

Consciousness, as we use it, is an unreality.

Reality is not alone a sense of the permanent, but the understanding of it. Our material consciousness deals only, at first, with the dead ends of things.

NO ROYAL ROAD

The laws of which the visible universe is the outcome cannot be learned in any correspondence school or by any man who is so wrapped up in his material concerns that he has lost his spiritual perspective. When, through spiritual trial and error, we slowly come to gain the "peace that passeth all understanding," then we begin to see, at first dimly

and at last quite clearly and freely, that the testimony of the senses is wholly reversed, that what formerly appeared to be calamities have lost all their sting and mortal death is nothing in itself, that our immortality is quite beyond our mortal consciousness, that our needs are supplied in the most perfect manner down to the most trivial details, and indeed, that nothing can possibly hurt us while all things are prepared for our use, and that we view all persons and things with a love that before was quite unimaginable.

Does it not, indeed, seem almost incredible that, when most of us know that our term of years is strictly limited, we should still spend nearly all of our waking moments with the crass assumption that our personal, material affairs are important? The hard-boiled egg I have referred to falls back on this defense because all the sense testimony is so conflicting that he prefers to become a fatalist rather than mess himself up with such a chaos. An admirable pose when we accept his point of view.

But the mysterious thing within us which is continually regurgitating the superficial material makeshifts and artificial stimuli impels us to keep asking, "Have I a soul?" and, "Is there a God?" to the point of distraction; so that we either allow ourselves

to be voluntarily hypnotized by some well-known brand of religion, or else take the spiritual bit in our teeth and resolve to bolt into the unknown, rather than to be fed out of a nose-bag any longer or stamp our hoofs off in a paddock and branded by the owner, whoever he may be.

Occasionally, no doubt, it requires courage or at least some power of decision, in the beginning especially, to make this break. Generally it is the result of desperation; we are either fed up with fleshpots or are stripped bare of health or possessions or both—reduced to a kind of hopeless pulp, for there is nothing more melancholy than a down-and-outer. Those who set aside the claims of spirit with a cheap gesture, those who declare that the world is governed by chance, those who bask in the lime-light of the senses and defy the unknown, are but sealing their own doom. Said Christ:

"You cannot serve God and Mammon."

IT MAY COME THIS WAY

To change the simile, in the beginning one may start out with a full set of all-weather tires and two spares, and, by reckless driving and road-hog tactics, finally get down to bare rims. Then only does walk-

ing, hitherto undreamed of, seem feasible, and, the God-given method thus forced upon one,—one being thus converted to it,—the wonderful thing happens. A sudden rush of understanding brings the complete realization that here indeed is the only way to God! And what sights one sees in nature—unfolding hills, shadowed roads, singing trees, a universe suddenly made vociferous with beauty and joy! The gallery of nature is so packed with masterpieces that to turn one's eyes away from them and limit them to one's own transient possessions—can this be said to be common sense?

THE CHASTENING HAND

Thus we never achieve anything for ourselves, but are thrust by what beforehand seems a cruel, but afterward is hailed as a loving, hand, into the fullest measure of achievement. What we seem by ourselves to do is simply the result of our previous yielding to the inner voice. For it is always the inner voice that directs us. We thus yield ourselves up to the Unknown; and the Unknown, like a fairy godmother, touches us with a magic wand. We are transfigured and showered with blessings. We see even then, vaguely, that the supply is infinite.

WHAT IS SUFFERING?

"How can a just God make all this suffering?" we hear some one saying from the imaginary world we have left behind. And we know that he is speaking from his own frightened material mind alone. We look back upon our own past tragedies and see that they were nothing. From the severely practical standpoint, suffering is the highest form of happiness, for it is the only process whereby we ascend to higher planes of understanding. What we suffer is only what we think we suffer, for in itself suffering is but an illusion. It is hard for the freshly wounded to accept this. But even science proves it, for science now declares there is no time and that all things are relative.

Christ said:

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

We have only to place ourselves by our own act at a point where we harmonize with the universe, and we shall then see that suffering, which is founded on false time, is but a chimera of the mind. It is only through suffering that we enter finally into a sense of the spiritual; and it is only through the spiritual that, looking backward, we come to understand the illusion of suffering.

To those who are struggling in the slough of despair, who have perhaps lost their health and fortune, or who are sated with luxury or ennui and the apparent disloyalty of "others," perhaps I can best make my meaning clear through a simple illustration.

Up to a comparatively few years ago it had always been supposed that there was no method of guiding any craft through water except by a rudder, and no other means of locomotion except by agencies under control of those on the vessel. But a few years ago a young American demonstrated that a boat could be guided from the shore by means of an invisible current. As to who guides the man who guides this current is of course a problem in the background. I mention it casually.

Now let us suppose that you are sailing a craft of your own and that you have been so battered about by the winds and waves and drifting fruitlessly from port to port, hoping for happiness and tranquillity, that you are now sick of the whole miserable affair and ready to jump overboard and end it. Suppose that something within you, you know not what, seems to point out to the distant horizon and say to you that beyond lie peace and calm and quiet sailing. Suppose that all the pilots you know shout out to you to keep to the shore, but that heedless, you finally head

your frail craft through them and beyond them; and then, when you are quite out of sight of land, you suddenly come to realize that an invisible current is actually guiding your craft—a current not to be defined in words.

This, briefly, is the experience of the mystic. Each one of us is part of the whole. There can be nobody else. All persons individually, no matter how dear they seem to us, that we falsely think of as somebody else, are in reality a part of ourselves, in so far as they are separate from the world, and belong on the spiritual plane.

Christ's words, to the last jot, then become illuminated. Our past sins then become voids, to be rapidly healed over with the spirit of universal Love.

We see that out of the Unknown comes God, and directs us truly on our way. We throw off our material responsibilities, content to pass our time in communion with the source of our Being. New spiritual vistas are constantly opened to us.

We know that we are immortal; that memory is only an illusion, in that it has confined us within the narrow limits of this false material life.

THIS WICKED WORLD

In this chapter the author takes up the question of science and biology, and contrasts the material point of view with the spiritual.

THIS WICKED WORLD

It is possible that two thousand years ago one man, equipped with all of the mechanical knowledge we possess to-day, could have manufactured an automobile. No doubt it would have been a desperate undertaking, requiring patience and diplomacy in securing the coöperation of others, and generally a great deal of hard work. Still, there is no reason to think it could not have been done.

Two thousand years ago the same natural elements which go to make a motor were present, and the same mechanical laws governed. The only difference between then and now is that now we know more about the action of certain forces than we did then. If we are willing to admit that there is such a thing as chronological succession, they have always been there, just as the unknown medium by means of which we communicate by radio has always been there. Only we did n't happen to know it. Ten thousand years ago, or very much longer, there were reservoirs of oil waiting to be tapped, there were huge veins of coal waiting to be released. It is a highly dramatic thought which enables us to see man blindly groping

his way onward during those untold years, in total ignorance, while all around lay locked-up stores of energy needing only the magic touch of the wand of science to give him the material mastery of the world. And from this backward vision, is it not plain that, similarly, we are still blind to the infinite unknown sources of life that confront us—is it not right for us to believe that we are as yet only on the threshold of those spiritual glories which will, through trial and error, eventually be made plain to our vision?

EVERYTHING COMES TO US

We ourselves contribute nothing. It is a gross error to state that we originate anything. All we do, actually, is to release certain forces, thus getting them to work for us. If we can in time learn how to break up and release the energy in atoms, we shall then, apparently, be masters of the material universe.

What happens when we thus succeed in "inventing" something new for our purpose is that we first think of something we want—this leading to desire. We keep thinking about it so persistently that quite unconsciously, and in a way automatically, we begin by trying all sorts of ways of getting at it—foolish ways at first which excite our own ridicule. Thus

most of the great discoveries in science have been ushered in by pioneers who have generally been laughed at for their pains, and occasionally put to death. The whole process is purely mental and has no validity outside of the consciousness.

We can easily see how this law works in detail by examining some of the minor labor-saving devices of our own period. First we used hard tires on our high bicycles. Then it was discovered that a hollow tire pumped with air was better; was in fact so much better that it practically revolutionized transportation. After this, tires were gradually improved; first they went for a thousand miles; then two, three, four, and so on up to ten or fifteen thousand. They had always been pumped up until it was discovered that not so much air, in proportion to the rubber, was needed; hence the balloon tire. Now the habit of making discoveries and then applying them is going on constantly everywhere. We are, in short, quite mad about it. We think of little else—all due to competition on the one hand and the possibility of enormous profits on the other.

As I said, we create nothing. We release only. Langley's flying-machine was pronounced a failure, yet it was afterward flown when somebody had learned how to fly with it. All we are doing all the time is to learn how.

ARE WE ANY HAPPIER?

And yet, in spite of all this astonishing record of scientific achievement, can it honestly be said that mankind is any happier than it was two thousand years ago? And why should this be so?

The reason is simple, easily demonstrated by the experience of any one. It is that no reliance can be placed on any material thing to produce happiness. Whatever we may have gained has been spiritually, not materially.

Take a group of children in a child's home,—children who have n't been used to anything,—and suddenly hand them a number of mechanical toys. They will snatch at them eagerly, even fight over them, and then as suddenly drop them and go back to some cheap invention of their own. Thus the human race.

I know an old man who has five fine motor-cars always on hand. He keeps trying new ones all the time; he has a number of children to whom he gives the used ones. He is unhappy. Nothing is more evident than that he must be, so far as these cars are concerned, for, although they are the latest and most expensive makes, he never keeps them; he is never satisfied with them.

It seems almost an insult to the intelligence of my

readers to tell them all this when the evidence lies all about us.

The desire to add something new to the collection of things we already have is not only universal, but in many respects commendable. There is no objection to it, if we understand it. But how few of us really do understand it?

If we should all suddenly stop trying to "get on," stop trying to make ourselves better materially, the visible world would collapse in short order.

How is it possible, then, to reconcile these apparently opposite points of view? First, that no reliance can be placed on any material thing, and second, that it is right to go on adding to our collection of material things?

I propose to answer this question in what follows. But I call attention first to the undoubted fact that their conflicting claims are at the bottom of most of the differences of opinion among the greatest thinkers during the last two thousand years—under one guise or another.

A MAD, BAD WORLD

The best example I know of one side is Thomas à Kempis, and I mention his book, "The Imitation of Christ," because it has probably been more widely

and universally read than any other book in the world, except the Bible. Thomas à Kempis has but one message—abjure the world—cast it out utterly —it is worse than a bad world; it is an impossible world. And that is precisely why so many unhappy people have derived such lasting comfort from reading this book. It secretly flatters them (although that is not the intention), for it holds up to biting scorn and to burning indignation the very thing which has so wounded them—not only wounded them, but also held them up to scorn; therefore, when they read those burning words they realize that their own feelings are being expressed better than they can hope to express them. These feelings are justified. It is this that makes martyrs.

GOOD AND BAD MARTYRS

I venture to say right here that it has often seemed to me that the martyr spirit has been abused—I mean, it has been misdirected. When it is mixed with self-pity, when it is based on desire for exhibition, then it is very bad. It has undoubtedly been used in this manner; probably at times we all have more or less of this abnormal strain in us. The real martyr, of course, is above all this; he is immune to material consequences.

Both Christ and Socrates were shining examples of those who died properly—that is to say, who gave up their bodies freely for a cause; certainly Christ died for the greatest of causes. But some martyrs have died because they liked it—because they gloried in it. We see them everywhere to-day; they are the ringleaders in that sort of sentimentality which has swept over such a large part of the globe—especially in America. It is only a question of degree. There are loads of people who are just as much addicted to self-sacrifice as others are to cigarettes. They steep themselves in service. That which in moderation is a part of a well-rounded human being becomes, when carried to extremes, an obsession. We are thus constantly erecting false images.

A GREAT SPIRITUAL AWAKENING COMING

The reconciliation of the two opposite points of view I have mentioned becomes easy if we understand that, in the spiritual world, discoveries and inventions are constantly being made, and, indeed, it also is not too much to say that at the present moment we are on the threshold of an awakening which, during the next fifty years, bids fair to carry the human race to heights at present unimagined, except by the few. It is precisely this renaissance of the spiritual

already referred to and to which I would now call attention. The subject is so vast and the consequences are so great, that, before entering upon it, one may well pause for a moment in contemplation of that coming and universal Peace which passeth all or nearly all of our present understanding. Those of us, however, who have caught, at first fleeting, and again more lasting, visions of this peace will join me, I am sure, in the aspirations we feel for the coming of this Kingdom.

TWO IN ONE

It must first be fully understood and constantly kept in mind that, as a subject to be written about, Man has a seemingly dual personality. In reality, as I shall hope to make clear, he has only one personality; but for general practical common-sense purposes, we may say of ourselves that we are two people. We are conscious only by contrast. There is an ego, and a non-ego; or there is a good and a bad, a saint and a devil. If we wish to make a practical definition, we can employ the words of John Masefield, who says:

> Man consists of body, mind, and imagination. His body is faulty, his mind untrustworthy, but his imagination has made him remarkable. Imagination is controlling and us-

ing the energy of which we are made. Those who succeed in this have access, through their partial energies, to all energy. The thoughts of these men have the divinity of all energy: they do not die.

That is a very beautiful and sincere way of expressing the spiritual side of man. It is an admission, if you will, that man possesses some sort of material instrument, possibly composed of millions or trillions of nerve-centers, which enables him to vision the stars, to leave himself and his trivial concerns behind, so to speak, and mount on the wings of morning to unmeasured heights.

But how different is the attitude of the scientist to this faculty sublime! He dissects in the light of modern research, and declares their every flight can be accounted for in terms of sensation. "No one," he declares, "has been able to picture heaven except in sensual symbolism."

Thus man is two things: He is the known and the unknown. Each one of us is fully aware of that contrast in himself.

So far as my visible, or at least material, self is concerned, I know almost exactly what I am capable of doing. Why? Because in numerous tests I have tried myself out. I know that on a golf-course, I will average, day in and day out, six strokes to a hole. I know that I can drive a car through traffic

with a minimum of accident chances. I know when I am hungry, how much work of a given sort I can do in a day, and so on through a long list of things in which I have been more or less trained.

WHAT I DON'T KNOW

On the other hand, I don't know what I will do under unexpected conditions. I don't know when I may lose my temper, when suddenly over some trivial thing I may shed tears, or what mistakes I may make in misjudging others or miscalculating various results in the course of a day. Sometimes I feel inspired, I seem to walk on air; at others my feet are leaden, my heart is heavy, I am saturated with despair.

This, briefly, is the common lot. Each one of us has a double; and the conflict of the two personalities in us is probably what makes life such a gamble, and therefore, on the whole, so interesting.

It is this subjective sense of contrast that shades into our thought about others, colors all our notions of literature, art, music, etc., and—as a result—keeps producing in us successive moods which are, or certainly seem to be, highly inconsistent. We take on atmospheres, according as we are sensitized. I have often succeeded temporarily in persuading a

man to believe something, so that his enthusiasm has mingled with mine. The next day we were both cold. Man goes along in a kind of zigzag, always, however, keeping a main course. We are continually coming back to center.

IDENTITY

These two men I write of who are in us, or rather who go to make up what we ourselves are, are constantly varying in their relationship to each other. And inasmuch as this is so, they are therefore constantly varying in regard to their relationship to others about them. This fact in itself—which, if we contemplate it for a moment, seems complicated enough—is much more complicated by another fact, which is that each one of us leads an inner and an outer life. We present to the world a kind of camouflage of our secret self. It is by this camouflage that we come to have an identity. Acute and experienced observers penetrate beneath this outer shell, and frequently may discover us as we are, or at least as we think we are.

Having thus merely indicated in an offhand manner the various sections of human personality,—which is sufficient for my present purpose,—let me now go back to the Man himself.

WHAT IS MAN?

Man's two personalities, which for convenience sake I shall term the known and the unknown, are constantly changing in their relationship, as he advances along the line of human experience or grows older. At first he is not aware of his material self at all, except as it is some one else. He thus speaks of it as in the third person. Some one has named this material self "Bob," and when he speaks of it he says, "Bob is thirsty," just as we teach parrots to say, "Polly wants a cracker."

Now, is it now perfectly evident that this unknown Ego, or other hidden self, is the spiritual self, and are not the words of Christ plain, therefore, when he says:

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"?

Furthermore, this inner self, of which we are all more or less permanently, if fitfully, conscious, is at its best, or purest, in childhood. The souls of children have not become obscured by this thing which we call the world. As a man grows up, this process of obscuration becomes acute, as a general rule, in proportion to his material success and the perfection of his physical health. When these two depend-

encies, however, begin to decline, or when other catastrophes occur, he is frightened away from his material or dream self, and, pausing first upon the threshold of his inner self, timidly enters. Thus, step by step, with many advances and many recedings, he gradually comes to vision life in a double sense. He sees on the one hand the whole phantasmagoria of material existence called civilization, and on the other, his inner and gradually developed spiritual vision begins to make out the unutterable and immeasurable spiritual universe as it unfolds before him. He goes from unreality to reality.

These varying stages in which all men from birth to death find themselves account for so many violent differences of opinion; they account for sects, schools, and classes, such as agnostics, atheists, reformers, fanatics, philosophers, and so on.

WHAT ARE WE REALLY HERE FOR?

"What is it," earnestly inquires one of these gentlemen in one of the numerous books offering us the secret of happiness, "what is it we are all of us looking for?" And he replies immediately and with the utmost confidence, "To get the most out of life?" Yet this is not the truthful answer, although it seems to be the correct one; which shows us how careful we must be in our statements. It is undoubtedly cor-

rect as an observation upon the occupation of the majority, for this occupation, as we view it, is undoubtedly to get the most out of life; yet its falsity becomes apparent when we ask any man if thus far the most he has got out of life is what he really intended to get. He will tell you that it is, as far as it has gone, but he is still hoping for more. Every man is therefore seeking for something which he has not yet got. In each case what we are after is an ideal. We must have something concrete to go by, so we grab whatever appears to us as being symbolic of this ideal; and because it is always falling short, we keep on grabbing. The right answer to my friend's question, therefore, is not that we are really trying to get the most out of life, but that we are trying to discover an ideal which will render the things of this life superfluous or unnecessary, as a limited means of helping us to approximate a vision of our ideal. We are always dealing with substitutes, with makeshifts, and we know this, although not always willing to acknowledge it. Thus, in a very much more cryptic, underground, subtle manner, we come very close to the position of Thomas à Kempis, who admonishes us so earnestly to give up the things of this world in order that we may see God. For it is the vision of God, the Ultimate Reality, term it what you will, which we all seek; although this is not gen-

erally apparent. We come to see that, from two standpoints diametrically opposed to each other, men arrive at the same conclusion, namely, that no reliance can be placed on matter, and that whatever peace and happiness are achieved in this world must be through other sources.

THE SEARCH FOR REALITY

What are the sources? Thomas à Kempis (and the reader will understand that I am using him as a representative of the mystics), declares that there is only one source—God. Henry Ford declares that mankind can be lifted up through a right conservation and manipulation of material machinery. The Rockefellers, deeply religious, feel much the same. They employ their material possessions to aid science in its fight against disease. They also use their possessions to bulwark our educational system. In each instance they are seeking to help fulfil an ideal. Their purpose may be mistaken; but just as the man who buys a beautiful object of art desires to symbolize some ideal, so do they make this effort. The two impulses are identical. We are always striving to reach out, through the material, unto the Unknown.

Perhaps this is the right moment for me to convey by a few simple illustrations the reason for my belief

that we are approaching a universal spiritual renaissance; first prefacing this by the observation that my readers need not be astonished if up to the present moment I have scarcely, if at all, even hinted at religion. Indeed the thing I am writing about is much bigger than man-made religion. It is much bigger than anything there is, because it takes in everything there is. It is God, it being understood of course that the term God is merely a symbol to express the Unknown, the Universal, the Eternal, the Creator, Infinite, and so on.

BUTTERFLIES AND ANTS

Let us suppose there are two families, both equally well off. One family will splurge; the other will not. One family will live simply; the other ostentatiously. We see these contrasts constantly, so that we come to say that the amount of money necessary for maintenance depends upon one's individual tastes. The difference between any two families in their attitude toward material things is a sure indication of the line of progress. Transportation and wireless are bringing together the peoples of the earth so fast that even before our eyes we can see the swift signs which manifest a certain spiritual awakening. A vast upheaval is taking place, and the

abhorred monsters, crawling things, hideous abnormalities are coming to the surface and being borne off on the great tide of unreality. We should understand that it is not given generally to the educated, the intellectuals, the academicians, in fact, the so-called high thinkers, to understand these things, because almost all of the mental machinery erected by processes of culture is in itself based on the material senses. That is why so many of our intellectuals are pessimists. They throw up their hands and predict the death of civilization. They do not know that they are in reality predicting a new birth of man.

THE IRONY OF THE INTELLECT

"What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" It is indeed a subtle satire on our boasted civilization that the only ones among us who, through our schools and colleges, are taught the art of expression, should be blinded to the truth by the very forces which have given them this art. The revolt from these material traditions which we have occasionally witnessed in men like the poet Shelley is merely evidence of the spirit of the true God breaking material bounds and cutting through formalism like lightning from Heaven.

There are many other factors which, if it were possible to make a scientific survey of mankind in general, should properly be taken into account. It would, indeed, be possible to make a list of the various classes of mankind in relation to their material sources of supply. The *Nouveaux Riches* would then be brought into sharp contrast with the Blue Bloods. Those below the pauper line—that is, over the world, the vast majority—would be tabulated not from the intellectual, but from the spiritual, side and their spiritual desires better appreciated. But among all these various species there is one class, comparatively small, which deserves our minute attention, for they offer a basis of study not presented by any other. These are the multimillionaires.

THE MULTIMILLIONAIRES

It must be emphasized here that the law of self-preservation is the supreme and universal rule among men everywhere. The exceptions are invariably abnormalities. This law is so persistent that when a man has succeeded in removing himself from want, even when he has acquired possessions which solve completely the problem of maintenance, he still keeps on, impelled by the very inertia of his original impulse, to accumulate. It is often remarked that a

man with fifty thousand a year is poorer than a man with five; the reason being that his family has acquired extravagant tastes, social ambitions, etc. But there is always a limit beyond which so much money has been accumulated that there is no material wish which may not be immediately gratified. When this limit has been reached, several things may occur. The man may become a miser, as in the case of Russell Sage. He may become a gambler for material power, as in the case of E. H. Harriman. He may become a kind of material social reformer, as in the case of Henry Ford. Whatever he does become, it is highly important for us to remember that there is a minute but quite distinct, class of men existing in various parts of the globe who have utterly and completely removed themselves from any material struggle. What they do, therefore, how they live, what they think, all these things have a direct bearing upon the problem presented by Thomas à Kempis.

THE TWO ATTITUDES

I have attempted to show that there is much in common between the attitude of Thomas à Kempis and Henry Ford. Mr. Ford has repeatedly admitted the useless quality of possessions so far as one's self is

concerned. And what else is there? "A man can wear but one suit, eat only three meals a day, and sleep in one bed," declares Mr. Ford in effect. This is trite. It has often been said before; but then everything has been said before, and its significance is due to the relationship shown between itself and other things seemingly inimical to it. Ascetics like Thomas à Kempis assert that the world must be completely abandoned. All along the line of history are numerous examples of saints who have given up luxury and possessions to take the vows of poverty. Henry Ford arrives at the same conclusion in quite another manner—through satiety. But so saturated is he with material things that his spiritual aspirations—and they are undoubtedly in evidence—go out in their growth through material things. Henry Ford believes the world can be regenerated by Capital plus Love. Thomas à Kempis believes that Capital must be eliminated. It does not appear to me that his religion, as fundamental as it undoubtedly is, is a religion of pure love.

POSSESSIONS BECOME SO MUCH DEADWOOD

In other words, just as one's spiritual understanding becomes clear enough, then the things of this world drop off quite naturally; they have no real

meaning. This process is a gradual one, but it is really much swifter than any one would suppose. One who has begun to derive his spiritual sustenance from God direct, moves about in this material world without fear, holding dominion, mingling, as Christ did, with publicans and sinners, himself a common man, but all the time holding himself separate. The attitude which has to do penance, the wailing-and-beating-one's-breast attitude is in itself evidence that there is something spiritually wrong. Said Christ:

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father? But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not—"

Enough has been written already in these pages to show that there are diversities of gifts. It should be remembered, however, that no matter how complex may seem our modern civilization, its various phases must all be referred to a common origin, namely, the human soul. The two questions "What do I think about it?" and "How do I feel about it?" comprehend all things. There is but one mind. Those things which rise up to awe and confuse us under various forms of personality—even as intellectuals, philosophers, etc., are but chimeras of the consciousness. Man is indestructible, immortal.

"AM I SECURE?"

Therefore, it becomes evident that what man really desires out of life is not happiness, not absence of struggle, but a sense of security. I venture the assertion that if one man among us all, inheriting the common instincts of the race, should be offered immunity from those trials common to us all, he would refuse it instantly. He would not care to be different. The acceptance of such an offer would immediately set him apart from his kind. It would rob him of everything, not only that makes life painful, but that makes it dear. The best thing we can say of any man is that he is human; he is like the rest of us. That was the best thing said of Christ.

The only known way of enlightenment is by what we term suffering. Trials tend to perfection. Fear is the greatest negative power in the world, for it is by finally overthrowing it, we conquer. If there never had been any fear, there would never have been any progress.

WHY SHOULD WE BE GRATEFUL TO ADAM?

What a truly wonderful thing it was on Adam's part to fall. Where would we be to-day if he

had n't? There would have been nothing to atone for, nothing to live down, naught to overcome. I venture also the assertion that any man with a pint of red blood in his veins, placed in Adam's position, would have done the same thing. The great criticism to be made against Adam, it seems to me, is not that he fell, but that he never tried afterward to defend himself, he was such a coward about it. That is why I personally have so little patience with the race of ascetics and martyrs. Not only are they not good sports, but they have also bred such a race of bad ones. Is it not plain that we can keep the world where it ought to be, that with Christ we can hold dominion over land and sea, that we can learn to walk with God and see visions in the clouds, without eternally beating our breasts, sleeping on thorns and starving our bodies?

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on."

It would seem to be the height of impudence on the part of those professing to be followers of Christ so flagrantly to disobey his express teaching as is done by the ascetics. The passion for self-inflicted punishment under the form of penance, as I point out elsewhere, is nothing but a material form of subjective sensualism. Christ's words are explicit:

"Take no thought." He also says that those who first seek the Kingdom will have all these things added unto them. Let us remove all limitations and be free!

DAYLIGHT AHEAD

That is the way the spiritual awakening will come, indeed is now coming to the human race. It will come as a great revolution in which those who have been blind will see at first through a glass darkly and then face to face. That is precisely what is already happening. Signs of it are everywhere. The seeming decadence of society, the crimes, the divorces, the hideous vulgarities, all of these things are as naught compared with *The New Day.*

FEELING THE TRUE GUIDE

It is always what we feel that counts, and not what we think.

The unrealities which envelop us in countless forms of matter and personality seem to be real only because we allow ourselves to be so completely terrorized by them. It is truly astonishing how at the first decision on our part, even though it be made in fear and trembling, they fall away from us, and in the twinkling of an eye we recede from them and get our growing sense of harmony in the infinite spiritual

world. Christ has made this unfoldment so plain that one has but to read his words to understand ("The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed"), provided there is a desire to understand. But just as Christ has tried to make his spiritual meaning plain to his disciples by using material symbols (his illustrations being invariably taken from common objects in nature), so, in order to understand the absolute perfection of spiritual dawn, we must approach this understanding through the so-called visible world.

THE SPIRITUAL IS ONLY COMMON SENSE

If one may judge from ordinary observations and conversations overheard, most unthinking people seem to regard any man with spiritual tendencies as a long-haired and side-whiskered fanatic who goes about snatching cigarettes from the lips of wicked women—some one who can not be trusted to fulfil any of the ordinary obligations of life; or else he is regarded as a kind of superior person who does n't "mingle," who, for some cryptic reason, must outwardly be regarded with respect, but who is secretly set down as merely another disciple of the Blah School. These two conceptions are naturally subject to many variations, but in general they may be

merged into the criticism that the spiritual person has something the matter with him which cannot be cured and should be given a fairly wide berth. All this is more or less inevitable, because, from time immemorial, fakers and hypocrites of all sorts have taken on the spiritual atmosphere in order to put over some of their frame-ups on their victims; and so numerous have they been that the whole spiritual content or picture has been changed to support these derisive conceptions in the minds of honest people. The actual truth is that those who have any spiritual development (and they constitute a large and important class, a large proportion outside of the churches) are severely practical, with scarcely any notion at all of spiritual terms. Many of these men and women are doing the most important work being done in the world, certainly carrying the burdens. They are scarcely aware of their oneness with God, the Unknown, and certainly would have no time to talk of it. The English-speaking world at least is full of organized bodies of professional Christians who, obeying merely gregarious instincts, form themselves into groups for purely social purposes under the outward form of religion. These masses of people, so far as their organizations (or churches) are concerned, have scarcely any notion of spiritual values; if they did, they would understand that spir-

itual development can only come in silence and individual isolation, and not in church suppers, get-together services, etc.

"BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD"

True spiritual development in any individual is not something far off or to be defined by the platitudinous patter of salvation. It consists of moments, of flashes, sudden illuminations, which take place anywhere and is in effect a slow-gathering sense of security, the absolute understanding that the world of the senses is unreal, that one is immortal, without beginning or end, and that no harm can come.

What we see in the visible world are what Swedenborg refers to as correspondences, and other writers call manifestations. It is extremely difficult to trace these vast unrealities back to their source because, as a matter of fact, they have no source; they are voids, the children of chaos; thus the war, the massacres, countless crimes and their attendant consequences, jazz, divorce, murder.

And these are nothing. To those who have entered unto a spiritual understanding, these things, together with the beauty of the world, are all resolved into their proper place in the consciousness. They vanish.

REALITY

The unknown becomes the only reality—all things are reversed. And as soon as the spiritual law is thus unfolded, all the problems of life begin to recede. This does not mean for one moment, as I have tried to point out, that perfection is attained, or that all pain or disharmony ceases. But the difference between this attitude and the other is the difference between life and death. It becomes from this moment of conversion our constant occupation to discover not only each day, but each hour, some new unfolding of our understanding of the spiritual law. We have retrogressions, haltings; but these do not matter. We know there is a God, that he is ever present, that nothing is too little or too infinite for Him. One of the most interesting, indeed the most infinitely satisfying, things about our progress are the moments of truly incredible illumination which come to us immediately after some halting, some problem which at the time seemed utterly hopeless. As we go on, these problems first keep confronting us, as it seems endlessly. No sooner is one disposed of, than another takes its place. After a succession of them have been solved, however, we acquire a kind of steady faith, a sense of security which acts upon us, even in dark moments, like a gyroscope. Thus,

slowly, our understanding is built up. How futile is it then for some scientist to tell us that nothing is known beyond the senses.

WHEN TRUTH COMES

What actually happens becomes very clear. The hitherto unknown spiritual world unfolds the universe with its absolute perfection, which has always been and always will be. Just as the law which, in the material world, makes the radio possible has always existed, so in the spiritual world the law which makes us see that our every need must be fulfilled has likewise always been. It is we ourselves who have changed and who must inevitably go on changing until we finally fully enter into the Kingdom. Thus, by what I may term a quite natural or normal process, we overcome the world, that is to say, the world drops away from us.

And what is this spiritual law I write of? It is so simple as to be defined in a few words.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.

This is the first great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

If we apply these simple rules to every problem, we shall see that every problem is immediately solved. War would cease. There would be plenty for all. Instead of man-made art, religion, literature, etc., we should be absorbed in the eternal beauties of a universe so beautiful that no words can describe it. If, for instance, we exclaim over the beauty of St. Peter's in Rome, think of how much more beautiful would be a community of men and women bound together wholly by the ties of a universal love. That would never mean that St. Peter's would have to be scrapped. On the contrary, St. Peter's would then have a new beauty, a more perfect glory. It would be illuminated with all the transcendent colors of the spiritual universe. True art and true religion are identical. The understanding of this sets us free. We cannot sin, no matter what we seem to do.

THE INTELLECTUALS

In this chapter the author continues his reflections, leveling his text at the intellectuals, explaining their internal machinery, and indicating the unreality and insubstantiality of their motives.

THE INTELLECTUALS

WHAT is an intellectual?

A man may be an excellent writer and yet not possess natural intelligence.

For a number of years I have wondered why it is that no writer, apparently, has had either the initiative or the courage to define that species of human being now somewhat popularly known as an intellectual. Some years ago, in quest of material for my own public, I wrote to a well-known woman writer, herself a full-fledged representative of the intellect, to write an article about intellectuals. She was known then as a "highbrow," a term now going out of use, and was the author of many reflective essays and stories of a very superior order. Being somewhat on the inside, I knew that this woman was not averse to accepting good money, and I was prepared to pay her double what she was in the habit of receiving, for her work was so precious (as they say in French, so précieuse) that it was limited to a few high-brow magazines. For instance, she was glad to receive seventy-five dollars for a story which, in the circle of intellectuals, was re-

corded as a masterpiece, whereas low people, who were popular, were getting all the way up to a thousand. This woman scorned me, and for a long time I could n't understand why, until it occurred to me that there is not only honor, but business, among intellectuals. Self exposure is unprofitable. The intellectual pose, sad as this may seem, is almost altogether based on business principles. An intellectual may be roughly defined as one who is educated, but not intelligent. This is perhaps a little rough, and not strictly accurate; but as Shakespeare once remarked, " 't will serve." To illustrate: A young man I have known for a long time, and who undoubtedly comes under the classification of intellectual (although he is a very human and genial enough person now)—this young man once secured a position with a woman's magazine of large circulation. After he had been there for some weeks, he went to one of the editors one day and said he had an article which he thought the magazine might like to print, but was in some doubt as to whether it was suitable. The editor, in reply, said: "Why don't you ask your wife to read it? Being a woman, she will probably be able to tell you whether it is right for our magazine." The young man smiled loftily and replied, "Ah, but you know my wife never reads your magazine." He did not stay there so very long

afterward. This little episode, if we happen to be in "society," would be classified as a lack of tact. But among editorial cave men, it is known by the phrase "not all there."

THE PROSE IS THE THING

Still, we must always make allowances. So far as base coin in quantities is concerned, every intellectual not only knows, by a sort of instinct, that his "appeal" is limited, but that his only chance to build up any kind of a permanent "trade" is never to forget his pose. One of the most distinguished intellectuals in this country, a tart critic who has acquired an international reputation, wrote in his beginning days a book of silly verse, reeking with soft sentiment. A friend of mine, himself one of the most polished poets in this country, who has a horror of anything resembling affectation, came across this little volume by accident. He pounced upon it, seeing its possibilities, copied off some of the verses with the author's name and, adding a few nice comments, sent it to a newspaper. It is almost needless to say that the boys in the newspaper office, who are not noted for tender treatment, grabbed this copy and maliciously put it in the most conspicuous place they could find on the editorial page. My friend, who is very careful about

his statements, told where he had seen the book, which was in the New York Public library. Thereupon the enraged author hot-footed around there and made strenuous efforts to get it suppressed. My recollection is that the library people refused and that the book is still there.

While in one sense all this seems disgusting, viewed from the trenches, it must be remembered that the intellectual is never so bad as he seems. His position may be defined in the words of a celebrated villain, *Iago,* who said:

> Who steals my purse steals trash; . . .
> But he that filches from me my good name
> Robs me of that which not enriches him
> And makes me poor indeed.

THE CASE OF R. H. DAVIS

One of the most distressing cases I know was the treatment of Richard Harding Davis. He was made to appear as a "highbrow" or intellectual, and many newspaper men, most of whom were secretly jealous of his success, never lost an opportunity to sting him with a paragraph. Two stories about him, neither of which was true, were eagerly printed and went the rounds. One was to the effect that among all the

girl photos which reposed upon his dressing-table was one bearing the legend "She does not bore me," and the other was that he once registered at a hotel "Richard Harding Davis and valet," and some rough person put after his line "John Smith and valise." Unfortunately, Davis had an affected, egotistic manner, and apparently liked to talk of nothing but himself. I took luncheon with him one day just after he had returned from Russia, where he had gone to report the coronation of the czar. His personal description of the coronation seemed to convey the idea that Richard Harding Davis, and not Nicholas, was being crowned, and that, indeed, the whole affair had been arranged by the Russian court in order that he might possibly write something about it for the American papers. This affectation in Davis, however, was actually due to a kind of innate modesty. He blurted out things about himself to hide his embarrassment. He was never anything but a boy, taking delight in his exploits, with himself as hero, in precisely the same way that he wrote. His enormous dramatic or story-telling talent drew his own personality into the swirl of his talk. Once come to know him, his real character was evident. Of course, the newspaper boys saw him only on the surface, and many of them said and wrote mean things about him, when they would

have gone to any length if they could have accomplished what he did.

WHERE THEY CAME FROM

The intellectuals, as they are somewhat vaguely known as a group, seem to have originated in Russia. This was in prerevolution days, and they were obliged to be secretive, as many of them were socialists, or disciples of Karl Marx. One of the most interesting of the Russian intellectuals was Prince Peter Alexeyevitch Kropotkin, whose "Memoirs of a Revolutionist" is one of the great books of all time. As the European war broke, in 1914, there was a pronounced stirring among writers, this incipient movement originating in European studios, where in art the cubists were being born, and in poetry the free verse and imagist forms were coming into notice. Naturally, such an upheaval as the war lifted to the surface of things many strange fish. Since the Armistice we have brought into being the word intelligentsia, a word that is not yet in the dictionaries and of which no one seems to know the precise meaning. It seems to be, in general, a kind of lower form of intelligence than that of the intellectual. Apparently it has no singular form, which would seem to indicate that a member of the intelligentsia cherishes as his idea to be "all things to all men."

IMPORTANCE OF LOCALITY

If we are to classify the intellectuals at all, however, and do it with any kind of accuracy, we must consider the locality. There is, of course, in every community, no matter how small, one or more intellectuals. If the community is large enough, a group is formed, and the latest vibrations from Paris, New York, Boston, and Chicago are duly recorded and assimilated. In the old days, Boston, technically described as a state of mind, long held the supremacy as the intellectual center of the country. One of the funniest things in all American literature is the account by W. D. Howells, in his inimitable little book "My Mark Twain" (almost the best bit of biography I ever read), of Mark Twain's celebrated speech on December 17, 1877, at the dinner given by the "Atlantic" staff to John G. Whittier on his seventieth birthday. Clemens, then a comparatively young man with an incipient reputation, memorized his speech beforehand. He dramatized the notables at the table—Whittier, Longfellow, Holmes, Emerson—as bleary outcasts in a log cabin, putting low language into their mouths. He could n't stop, as he knew nothing else. The shock was terrible. "My sense of disgrace does not abate. It grows," wrote Mark to Howells later. Charles Dudley Warner

tried to pass it off in the general gloom that followed by remarking, "Well, Mark, *you 're* a funny fellow." It was not until nearly thirty years after that this immortal speech, in which our greatest humorist had taken a true fall out of the intellectuals, was recognized on its merits.

THE CLAIMS OF CHICAGO

Some few years ago we were all similarly shocked when a notable critic gravely announced that Chicago was then the intellectual center. Those of us in the metropolis who were privileged to sit at the feet of some young man who had been transferred from the "Boston Transcript" to the "Times" or "World," or were receiving daily æsthetic ablutions at the hands of some Harvard graduate who had matriculated in dramatic art, had a fixed idea in our minds that New York was secure in its intelligentsia—it could be reached from Petrograd or Paris several hours sooner than Chicago. This critic's pronouncement, however, was of course final. The London "Times" had praised him. That was enough. Besides, he pointed out some of the men in Chicago who were preëminent. Since then the balance of intellect has shifted somewhat in favor of New York.

By this time my readers, who have without doubt become wary and suspicious of my footless attempt to define the intellectuals and who perhaps wonder why they seem to have so much to do with religion, will conclude that the case is hopeless, and walk out on me. Even if we are crude and quite possibly vulgar, however, let us go on for another lap and see if we cannot do a little better in our definition by a process of elimination. For instance, Booth Tarkington is not an intellectual. He writes stories which depict, with extraordinary fidelity, the actual life of the American people. Furthermore, he does not secretly depend upon indecency. I do not mean to imply that all intellectuals are indecent. Nevertheless, we must admit that there is a Semitic strain in a great deal of our intellectual stuff, and it must be admitted that there is a kind of subtle and poisonous indecency among certain Semitics which is not the kind of stuff we inherited from such men as William Bradford, Daniel Boone, William Penn, Benjamin Franklin, and other pioneers of America.

COMPARISONS

But, to go over on the other side of the fence for a moment, there is a sense in which Edith Wharton,

undoubtedly our greatest woman writer, is an intellectual. In thus making an intellectual distinction between Mrs. Wharton and Mr. Tarkington—and, it must be admitted, to her disparagement—I am fully aware that I am on delicate ground. The fact is that Mrs. Wharton has gained intellectually by long sojourn in European atmospheres, she has correspondingly lost as a true portrayer of America. Where America—as in the life of its metropolis and in its "high society"—parallels or matches similar European strata, Mrs. Wharton's touch is sure, her art unquestioned. But if America is different from any or all the other nations in the world, is n't that what we want to have portrayed for us? Is n't that genuine literature, as distinguished from the purely intellectual? And how can Mrs. Wharton do this when she abandons her country and goes elsewhere to get her facts? The same thing was true of Henry James. His work thus deteriorated constantly as he grew older. He had enormous talent. He had a fine soul, as souls go. His conceit—especially about his dramatic performances—was the conceit of a four-year-old. But if he had lived here and done as Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson are doing, he might have escaped entirely being an intellectual and become as great as they are.

UNPATRIOTIC?

What I particularly dislike about the attitude of all so-called intellectuals is their practice of throwing mud at their own country, when they really don't understand any more about it than the man in a barber shop. Quite naturally, compared with decadent European states, we are common, ordinary, vulgar, and so on. I myself hate a lot of things we are doing, just as any man hates certain primitive things in himself, and in this book I have not hesitated to say so. But it certainly requires what so many intellectuals have not, namely, common sense, in order to see that many of the things we are accomplishing in this country—as wasteful, as indeed sinful as we are—are things which have never before been done in the history of mankind. The intellectual, for example, would scorn to use the word Love, except in some derisive or off-hand intellectuality. He could n't, because if he did, it would damage his reputation for tartness by so much. Therefore, do you not see quite plainly that a reputation for any particular kind of thing is dangerous, because it is limiting? If such a thing can be imagined as an intellectual going to a Methodist camp-meeting and being converted, nobody would ever know it,—at

least the probabilities are that nobody would ever know it,—because he would be ashamed to admit it.

The truth is that the mere cultivation of our intellects carries an enormous risk. If we make this an exclusive process and fail to keep in the thick of our ordinary occupations, such as marrying and having children and playing games and being generally foolish, then we are bound to lose out in the long run, just as Henry James lost out. Nothing is so important to our intellectuals—whoever they may be—as themselves and their daily utterances. And nothing is so unimportant to everybody else.

THERE ARE GRADES

I could give here a tentative list of American intellectuals, with intelligence percentages such as they use in business concerns and colleges to determine such things. If a man were a hundred per cent intellectual, without any reservations, that would classify him as hopeless. Reservations would have to be made, and even with this handicap, there is always a chance that a pure intellectual will reform and become human and a useful member of society. I could give such a list, I say, but I refrain. It is not yet, as we low people say who indulge in clichés, "the psychological moment." This chapter is only

a pioneer article—about ten years ahead of its time. When such a list is compiled, however, it ought to be done by a committee of two—one supreme intellectual, and one ordinary human being, who can, however, read and write. He ought to be fairly strong, able to beat up his fellow-member if necessary, but restrained enough to let his fellow-member have due justice in his judgment.

SOME UNINTELLECTUALS

At present, we know some of the "plain folks" who are not intellectuals. George Washington was not. Abraham Lincoln was not.

I have no intention of disparaging the intellect too much. To write real words that hang together, or to do things which are worth while over a period of time, one must have some of it to make a go. And besides, we cannot really say that the intellectuals are, after all, much worse than the rest of us. They may be much like many congressmen who, having tried everything else, are obliged to be congressmen. So an intellectual has to fall back on the only asset he has—his intellect—and grub along as best he can. It is certainly unfair to stick at him too hard. He has to make a living. His pose is his purse. It is just as necessary for him to poke fun at Methodists

and Main Street strollers as it is that every Presidential candidate, as soon as he is nominated, should be reported as attending church services and holding up babies at railway stations and publicly kissing them.

INTELLECT AND WORK

Some years ago I was in need of a secretary, and a young woman applied for the position. She was a graduate of one of our leading colleges. She had traveled extensively abroad both in Europe and the Orient, and spoke German, French, and, I think, Italian. She had also studied stenography and typewriting. Her father, once wealthy, had spared no expense on her education, and she came to me well recommended from a prominent man for whom she had worked. I was at first so abashed by her overpowering superiority that when I escaped from her presence at night my wife had to fan me to sleep. At the end of a short time, however, I discovered that, although she could sail all around any of us in academic knowledge, she did n't get on. She resented the office manager, whom she considered an uncultured person, and I never could count on her getting her work done. I told her finally to go, but she suddenly broke down and pleaded so hard that I suggested that perhaps a little rough treatment might

do her good. In a year she became a remarkably efficient woman.

What was her trouble? It was quite simple. She had never learned how to work.

And that, I believe, is one trouble with so many intellectuals. Many of them are so smart that it 's painful. They generally have some trick of talent, which carries them along until they finally acquire a positively uncanny skill in evading work. Along with this they get a fictitious reputation for judgment on all sorts of things of which they know nothing. This attitude might seem in itself to be quite above any material or financial consideration, were it not for the fact that the principal conversation of a large proportion of intellectuals is taken up with how much money they are making, or hope to make. We must not blame them for that. Shakespeare was a business man, looking to the pounds, shillings, and pence. The trouble comes when you attempt to adjust your own private practices to your publicly expressed sentiments.

BIG MEN VERY ORDINARY FELLOWS

The big men are all commonplace. When you meet a man who is abnormally bright, who has a flow of wonderful words, who is very interesting and very

clever, it is generally safe to distrust him. His gift may be largely a substitute for work. It is true that many intellectuals work very hard and accomplish much, but if they succeed, in the right sense, it will be found that in proportion to their success they tone down their cleverness and rely more upon their capacity for work. The world is run by hard labor. There is nothing else to it than that.

The fault does not lie with the young intellectuals themselves, so many of them who have, since the war, come out of college and joined the intelligentsia. The fault lies with the fact that they have never been taught how to work. They therefore naturally fall back on what talents they have, make as much noise as possible, and hope to "get by" with it. They never get by. But many of them wake up in time to settle down to hard work.

THE POVERTY OF WORDS

The lack of spiritual discernment and natural intelligence among intellectuals generally is due to the fact that language is the lowest and feeblest form of expression.

They become so much occupied with the mere juggling of words, at which they attain great skill, it is impossible for them to understand that, by doing this,

they have pinned themselves down to a very minute fraction of the universe. There is small difference between an intellectual and a sleight-of-hand performer.

Virtually all the big writers were bad writers. Skill in words and volubility in speech are both signs of inferiority. The exceptions to this rule are rare.

Twelve thousand words is as much of a vocabulary as is used by the most prolific writers. Think of limiting the universe to twelve thousand words! It is n't being done.

If you doubt this, try a simple experiment. Consider all the feelings you have had in the course of a day, and then try to express them in a few words, or in many.

WHEN THE INTELLECT KNOWS ITS PLACE

Is, then, education so futile, and are people to be condemned merely because they have been given a talent for self-expression? Is there nothing in culture, and can it be said that a great poet has not a finer gift than a common laborer?

Certainly not. The case against the intellectuals is not that they are intellectual, but that they are nothing

country to name several men who have learning and culture and, indeed, every intellectual quality in abundance, and yet who, as I have intimated, would not be classed as intellectuals.

The intellect, as this material world goes, is a very necessary part of our make-up. But then, so are other things. We depend upon our stomachs to assimilate food to carry us over from one day to another. We depend upon our education and general mental development to earn our daily bread and to keep us from being run over by Ford cars.

All these "parts" are in the same general category. They belong in the world of matter. The moment we bow down to and worship any one of them, we are slaves, bowing before the false images of unreality.

Our real selves are born of the spirit, and the really great men of the earth reveal their spirits by their mastery of matter. That is why so many of them have taken so little pains with the mediums through which they spoke.

THE ROAD TO DESTRUCTION

In this chapter, The Problem of Suicide, the author goes back to the individual, and shows how he may destroy himself by depending entirely upon material things.

THE ROAD TO DESTRUCTION

On the broad highway of materialism which the great majority of men travel, or at least appear to, there are three forces which destroy their thousands and tens of thousands. These are money, divorce, and suicide.

These three dragons (we may as well term them thus) are intimately related to one another. Suicide is merely the legitimate offspring of the other two.

Three of my own friends, one of them very close to me, and others near enough for me to observe their gradual decline into this oblivion, have committed suicide. In addition I have observed numerous other cases.

From confessions I have heard and from a perusal of the lives of many men, I am convinced that the tendency to commit suicide, although latent, is practically universal. I believe that the great majority of men and women some time during their lives entertain thoughts of self-destruction. Statistics are easily accessible through proper channels. What I am now attempting to show is that suicide is but the logical and inevitable end to a life given up to

material things, without corresponding development of internal resources.

It is a spiritual disease, or rather it is due to a spiritual lack.

HOW IT BEGINS

The first symptoms of a tendency to suicide are a kind of selfishness, accompanied by a shrinking from contact with others, or perhaps I should say an evasion of disagreeable things coming through others; for in many cases, the suicide is not only outwardly cheerful, but keeps up his contact with many others to the end. The process which leads toward suicide is often so subtle that the victim himself has no notion of it. His first visualization of the act may take place years before the act itself.

If we are materially successful, if we have plenty of money, it is quite natural for us to indulge in luxuries—and similarly, to avoid the things we dislike. This twin process results often in a fatal hold upon a human being. Offsetting it is native character, and the realization of the danger, which not alone puts us on the defensive, but helps us to overcome our material ease. It by no means follows that because a human being is rich, he is selfish. Considered by itself, money is a nonentity. It is strictly

neutral. In the hands of idle, selfish people without discipline or natural intelligence, it may become an enormously destructive force. The moral law here steps in and wreaks vengeance upon the actors themselves, who, growing more constantly restless, at length yield to the despair which comes from satiety.

We see all about us, in various stages of disruption, men and women struggling to overcome the destructive tendencies thus outlined, realizing subconsciously their danger, and endeavoring to neutralize it. When they succeed, it is due generally to their character-background. This sense of danger is one of the most powerful influences to keep people straight, to give them good manners, to make them go to church, indeed, to occupy themselves in every way with the general betterment of social conditions, civic and political.

DEFENSIVE

This influence, it will be seen upon reflection, is not a spontaneous aspiration for better things. It is due to secret fear (already referred to in the chapter on the dream god) or a vague sense of danger. In short, everybody feels instinctively what I am trying to bring out in this book, namely, that materialism of any kind is destructive, carried to its logical end. They there-

fore fortify themselves by altruism, trying to steer a middle course between too much indulgence on the one hand and too much ascetism on the other, and in other ways.

The idle rich thus take special care of their bodies, and, by almost incredible skill in arranging their pleasures, contrive to skim along on the surface of things until indifference to spiritual consequences becomes a kind of crust. Be not deceived. Their way is death.

Occasionally, when they come to the end of their rope, the real difficulty presents itself. Then the lack of spiritual development drives them either into a slow or fast form of self-destruction. There is no escape, for there never can be any compromise. Man cannot serve God and Mammon. It *appears* to work for a time, but in the end gets you.

A CASE

One of the friends I have mentioned was a bachelor. He had a position as one of the leading officers in a large corporation, with a salary of $25,000 a year. He was popular and was elected president of, at that time, the largest athletic club in America. I was his guest once at this club, and was amazed at the apparently wonderful life he led. He was temperate,

hard working, living a life of morality, exercising judiciously, and enjoying the society of his friends. He left an estate of $100,000. He shot himself. Why?

Because he had no internal spiritual resources.

Undoubtedly, there was a malady present in him, but he could have been healed of this tendency had he developed a faith in a Creator. *He had no real occupation.*

Those who have developed a spiritual life, even in small part, will fully understand what this means. They are never alone, never without a superior sense of consolation, of Oneness with God. That is worth all the money in the world.

WHEN THE DAM BREAKS

In the case of those who destroy themselves, there comes the culmination of a spiritual lack in a sudden and overwhelming despair. Materially it is expressed in the thought that they are no longer of any use. As soon as a man fully believes this, he destroys himself by a kind of automatic process. In many cases the victims have been discovered dead with numerous cigarette ends in front of them, showing the abnormal consumption of these "coffin-nails," as they have been sometimes referred to by the smok-

ers themselves. The presumption is that during their despair they sought extreme consolation in excess of cigarette smoking, this only increasing the poison and driving them more swiftly onward. The fact is, however, that in these cases the cigarettes were not the cause, but only the manifestation, of a more serious spiritual ailment.

WE CANNOT STOP THINKING

No human being can stop thought from flowing through his mind. This energy thus accumulating must have an outlet. If the stream of thought is deflected into wrong channels, the result is destruction. On its purely physiological and psychological side, the psycho-analysts have shown the manifestation of this material law. The introvert, or victim of repressions or complexes, resorts to brooding, a form of intensive fantasy, this leading to certain self-destruction. The moment an outlet is made, the poison is released and freedom comes. Suicide is always the culmination of a long process. One friend of mine shot himself under a tree to which he had wandered. Before this happened, a group of people who knew him tried in every way possible to break the spell surrounding him. Apparently this was impossible. As one close to him said afterward,

"He tried to think his way out." No more deeply ironic comment on the futility of the intellect alone could have been made than this.

THE TOBOGGAN

Among men, the common cause of suicide begins with the distressing thought that they are slipping, usually in fortune or health, or both. Up to that moment they have drifted along in the man dream—sleek, prosperous, and physically comfortable.

It is in the pathetic bewilderment of this moment, suddenly feeling the ground beginning to give under them, that they reach forward to grasp nothing but thin air. No one can save them but themselves, and this chance has been lost. If, back in their lives somewhere, they had paused only for a day to put in some hard thinking of the right kind, calmly dispassionate and free from fear, spiritually directed to the source of life, this might easily have made all the difference between life and death.

THE CONSENSUS OF OPINION

Even if we accord to the advocates of a spiritual life only one half of the evidence, we shall find that the majority among our greatest thinkers in the world,

Christian and agnostic, mystic and philosopher, are agreed that no dependence can be placed on material things. If a conscientious list of all those men in all branches of activity were made, the result would reveal overwhelmingly the fact that a large proportion of them either lived in poverty or, if they possessed wealth, paid small attention to it. Among these, I mention Lao Tse, Socrates, Christ, St. Augustine, St. Francis; and in more modern times, Fabre the great French naturalist, Rodin the great French sculptor, Benjamin Franklin, Emerson, Thoreau, Washington, Lincoln; and more recently, Charles Steinmetz and Franklin Lane. If likewise we classify the intellect as material and merely the intricate development of sense impressions, we may also say with truth that a large proportion of the greatest things have been achieved by the ignorant. Napoleon, the most vivid figure in French history, was not a Frenchman and never really knew the French language. Keats, who has perhaps interpreted the Greek spirit better than any one else, was a poor Greek scholar. Joan of Arc had no military training. Walter Scott confessed that he was no grammarian. Of Balzac, George Moore has said that he knew from the beginning how life was made, and did not need to observe it. Certainly, the creator of the *Comédie Humaine*, containing over two thousand characters, had no time to ob-

serve them in actual life; he created them. Jesus, while familiar with the Mosaic law, has left no record of writing, his sayings having been taken down by others. Neither money, on the one hand, nor formal material brain-training, on the other, can account for the greatest achievements of humanity. This list could be almost indefinitely extended, to include in one's own community those who have the most influence; and it will be invariably discovered that there is something spiritual in them which cannot be formulated.

FAMILIES

For over thirty years I have observed the course of many families (including my own) who have been born into wealth or who have acquired it, and in each and every instance the potent poison of money-excess has been the outstanding influence for destruction. Or perhaps I can put it more clearly by saying that excess of money has been the channel through which weakness has been manifested. Opposed to this, we must not underestimate the force of native character and common sense, which in so many cases turns the scales in favor of genuinely useful careers. Thus we have among our most wealthy and substantial people a large number of families who not

only overcome the destructive possibilties of wealth, but are able to control and direct their possessions into useful channels. It frequently happens that when things seem the worst with an individual, he is merely working through a period of recklessness, perhaps out of curiosity, and that, underneath it, his character is forming. In this respect our judgments must always be tempered with patience and tolerance. Money must be mixed with character and right intention to make it serve, but even at its best it is the least among the servants of man. What count most are ideas, and the garret, the desert, and the laboratory have furnished more of these than the directors' room, the picture palace, or the editorial sanctum.

COMMON SENSE ONCE MORE TO THE FRONT

It will be seen from what I have written that the much extolled life of self-sacrifice and unselfishness, which has been set apart as such an important function of the Christian life, is based on solid principles of conduct, and, simply as a method of practical wisdom, is a necessity. Moreover, it is not specially confined to so-called Christians, but is always the concomitant of good judgment applied to one's life. Regarded in this way, it is a defensive measure. Thus,

if you would keep yourself normal and healthy, even as a materialist, occupy yourself with affairs; give, and you will receive; maintain your usefulness, thus overcoming a sense of failure, which is always standing at your side ready to knife you. So much for suicidal tendencies.

We shall find this same general principle holding good in matrimony; and in a broad, general way, if we wonder at the increase in divorce and the symptoms of so much unrest among married people, we may put it down to selfishness and luxury to a large extent. But there are other factors entering into married life to which I shall briefly refer.

MATRIMONIAL DEBACLES

The first typical case is that of a young couple who meet and marry in haste, without proper consideration, influenced largely by sex over-stimulus, and also by the lax standards which are the outcome of war. By this I mean the tendency to shift one's own personal responsibility. In war, there is no sense of responsibility except at the top. Furthermore, everything else is condoned but the main purpose. Sexual crimes are condoned and sexual laxity slurred over, so long as it does not enter into the results to be achieved. Thus, personal recklessness is carried

over after the war is won or lost, and persists in a series of waves, the recovery being slow. Now a young couple, weakened in their natural judgment by so much, will take a chance, without properly considering the consequences. I should like to emphasize here the fact that I am by no means an advocate of poverty, which I regard as a disease by itself, and that I believe at all times in the most painstaking scrutiny of all money-matters. It is wicked not to be severely definite about one's obligations. In the case I am describing, the husband soon finds himself overwhelmed by increasing expenses, of which he had small previous idea, although it is probable that some one has previously warned him. Shrinking from contact with so many burdens, he begins to seek temporary relief away from home. His wife, on her part, goes through a similar process.

Thus friction develops, the result being that the husband quits or goes off with some other woman. This case might be multiplied many times. Frequently young men abandon their wives, leaving them with one or more children.

The second case, also typical, is that of a man and wife who have lived together for many years and raised children. They fall apart because of apparently the same influences.

THE REAL SOURCE OF THE TROUBLE

But in both cases the cause is due to a deep spiritual lack. And this lies at the heart of national life.

There are men, seemingly of high intelligence, who are utterly incapable of understanding the spiritual life or believing in it. The continuous scoffing of these men, because they are able to express themselves so cleverly, is one of the worst influences among us, as I have pointed out.

These men are largely responsible for the laxity of morals, for the pathetic and unnecessary suffering so widespread, due to lack of restraint and spiritual insight.

THERE MUST BE SOMETHING MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN FLESH AND BLOOD

Unless a man and his wife are held together by something higher than the ties of flesh and blood, their matrimonial house is built on sand. A proper matrimonial relationship is where the physical is, throughout life, slowly receding and is being replaced by spiritual understanding. There is nothing more glorious and wonderful than the spiritual union of a man and woman who have passed through the various

physical stages up to this plane where they live together in a union which has no boundaries, and to which physical death is but an incident. There is nothing more disheartening than the falling apart of two married people because neither has developed spiritual insight.

One of the great obstacles to matrimonial harmony begins with minor fault-finding and criticisms, which gathering strength, end in savage discord—a condition in which husband and wife are constantly at bay.

The cure for this condition does not lie in the churches nor in any mortal institution, but in a widespread understanding of the great truths of life. And these can only be attained by a decision on the part of each individual to stop at nothing until he finds his Creator.

A husband who begins by criticizing his wife (even if he does n't voice the criticism, but only thinks it) for minor extravagances, gradually fastens upon her, within himself, a growing reputation for extravagance. She responds to this growing criticism in the only natural way,—by resenting it, thus setting up defiance, and either resorts to deception or to open rebellion. A sense of injustice grows between them, and thus a destructive influence is fostered in the very heart of the home.

HUSBANDS DO NOT CONTROL WIVES

Now in the first place, the husband has, actually, no power over his wife. This is proved in too many cases to the contrary. By taking the course indicated, he is doing all he can to make his wife worse. If, however, he had faith in a Creator, and understood that the spiritual law is absolute and can not be changed one iota by any individual, he would then, when confronted by a disturbing condition, begin to search himself minutely to discover the cause, instead of fastening the blame elsewhere. The first thing he would find is this: that while we do not influence others by advice or criticism or any sort of nagging, we can influence them by first abandoning in ourselves all the tendencies which we have falsely fastened upon them. In other words, a husband who accuses his wife of extravagance will invariably discover that the cause lies somewhere back in himself. When he cures himself, he cures his wife, or rather his wife is cured, for right at this point the perfect power of love is manifested. It is difficult to explain this any further or more particularly except that, in actual practice, it works. The rule is first always to think of others as perfect, and to remember that the faults we see in them are only reflections of our own imperfections. Second, to let them utterly alone to

do as they please, leaving their conduct to God. Third, to correct oneself. The covenant between husband and wife is the most sacred contract in the world. Neither should yield ground to the other, so far as personal conduct is concerned; and likewise, neither should attempt to coerce or nag or use the other for selfish purposes.

That is the trouble with our religion. It does not hold husbands and wives together. It has no practical value in solving our personal problems.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

In this chapter the author takes up the life of the Mystic, and, first defining the likeness of religion to mysticism, shows that the life of the mystic is the only reality.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

In the preceding chapters, having traced the course of the life of the senses in some of its most offensive aspects (it is popularly known as the world, the flesh, and the devil), I shall now pass on to the religious life.

What I particularly hope to make clear is this: that all the real work ever done in the world has been done by the spirit, and not by the mind or body; and if this truth were more universally understood, the human race would be made over.

Too much stress has always been laid on so-called brain power, and not enough on character. Yet the most every-day experience shows us the truth. The most successful men in any walk are not the smartest, but the most reliable.

Most of us learn very quickly that if we go out after money alone, we get nothing. In any office, the fellow who is constantly dissatisfied about his wages and asking for more is the one who falls behind in the race.

Real religion is merely a man's attitude toward

his Creator, expressed in his daily acts. We may say of him that he comes of a good family, that he has backbone, that he has inherited talent, or anything else that we like. When we come to examine him closely, we shall find that he succeeds or fails entirely according to what his unconscious attitude is toward God, or the source of his Being. We speak of a boy as being "a good boy." That is it. He does n't know why, but that is it.

So far as the religious temperament is concerned, that, I take it, is a thing by itself. It may or may not be a concomitant of true religion. It may be, and often is, the result of environment. Sometimes very young men are very religious; they have a call to preach. But the thing I am trying to define is much deeper than that. On every man's part, it is a real concern about why he is here. It has absolutely nothing to do with terms.

There are a great many varieties of religious temperament. In what follows I shall treat of mysticism.

The evidence presented by some of the great mystics in their lives is regarded by most laymen as quite inconclusive. They simply do not understand what it means. They have not, in this sense, been converted. And this is true even of some of the most eminent clericals.

ARE MYSTICS A CLASS APART?

In "Western Mysticism," by Dom Cuthbert Butler, Benedictine Monk, of Downside Abbey, the author of a very instructive book informs us in his preface that it was in preparation for twenty years; and in his epilogue, after having treated his subject from virtually all angles, he absolves himself from actual participation in mysticism.

"The question is," he declares, "from all this welter of unpromising stuff, do the experiences of the great mystics stand out with such distinction and such compelling force as to impose themselves by their quality, so that they constitute a class apart, able to carry the weight of their tremendous claim, and to assert its validity?

"For myself, I believe that this is so. To prevent misconception, I say quite simply that I have never had any such experience myself, never anything that could be called an experimental perception of God or His Presence."

How, indeed, could his conclusion of the validity of the claim of the mystics be otherwise? Even if for no other reason than ecclesiastical courtesy, certainly a priest of the Catholic Church could scarcely be expected to throw out of court the evidence of other priests. The fact is, however, that he is sup-

ported by what may be considered a more practical (or shall we say pragmatical?) authority. He quotes William James ("Varieties of Religious Experience") with good effect:

> Mystical experiences are, and have a right to be, authoritative for those who have had them, and those who have had them not are not in a position to criticize or deny the validity of the experience; the mystic is invulnerable, and must be left in undisturbed possession of his creed.

With regard to the question, which has so often been raised by psychologists, as to whether mystics can be said to be tinged with degeneracy, Father Butler declares that the "only valid criterion in judging them is their content, . . . 'By their fruits ye shall know them,'" and, to support his statement, once more calls on James:

> To pass a spiritual judgment upon these states, we must not content ourselves with superficial medical talk, but inquire into their fruits for life. The great Spanish mystics, who carried the habit of ecstasy as far as it has often been carried, appear for the most part to have shown indomitable spirit and energy, and all the more so for the trances in which they indulged.

It is very difficult, indeed, not to go on and quote from other authorities given by Father Butler, for the straightforwardness of his style and his simple

human attitude throughout are so evident that what he writes in favor of mystics is all the more convincing. Not that he is unfavorable to the belief that mysticism is something very real and very divine, only that he has the good sense not to be carried away by any suggestion of fanaticism.

WHAT IS MYSTICISM?

It may be thought now not improper to ask, What is mysticism? "There is probably no more misused word. It has come to be applied to many things in many kinds; to theosophy and Christian Science; to spiritualism and clairvoyance; to demonology and witchcraft; to occultism and magic; to weird psychical experiences, if only they have some religious color; to revelations and visions," etc.

But in this case, what is meant by mysticism is revealed by a study of the utterances of three great Western mystics, Saints Augustine, Gregory, and Bernard. We may answer the question by stating that mysticism is search after God and the method of attaining an actual sense of his presence. In order to come face to face with God it appears to be absolutely necessary, according to the unanimous testimony of all mystics, to give up the world, to abandon all sensual pleasures; and this process is a long and

painful one. "The intervening mist of sin is first washed away from the eye of the mind by burning sorrow; and then it is illumined by the bright coruscations of the unencompassed Light flashing upon it." Indeed, there can be no spiritual or mystical progress without self-denial. That is the first step. After reading so much of the language of ecstasy, some of which the author even naïvely hints is beyond his own comprehension, one is at first inclined to the opinion that the mystic is one in whom selfishness reaches its maximum. There is no sense of sorrow or sympathy expressed over the trials of others. Presumably there are no "others." The mystic is alone; by a long system of asceticism he finally succeeds in parting the veil that separates him from God. Like Moses, he is accorded, in a swift vision, a blinding flash of reality. He then sinks back into his former state, only to wait in patience and humiliation for the coming of the Presence once again.

"The soul," says Augustine, "in contemplation will arrive at that most high and secret reward for sake of which it has so labored; and in which are such joys, such a full enjoyment of the highest and truest good, such a breath of serenity and eternity, as are indescribable."

IS IT SELFISHNESS?

In utterances like these, which might be multiplied indefinitely, we discover nothing but the apotheosis of the self. And the whole matter appears to be severely practical. The pleasures of this world, be they of the flesh or of the intellect, are fleeting and utterly false. To get rid of them all is impossible; to push them sternly aside, and finally to emerge into the light of Reality—that is the object of all those who come at last to understand the follies of the senses. This understanding may come very early in life or it may be delayed. St. Augustine was not finally converted until he was thirty-two. Up to that time he had been the unceasing object of his mother's prayers, and had run the gamut of the carnal and the falsely mental. Then came the change, and another great mystic was enrolled—as Father Butler declares, perhaps the greatest one of all, if we except St. Paul.

And yet we should still be on the lower level of the most misleading criticism if we assume that mysticism is only a kind of supreme selfishness. The distinction between living for one's own soul and doing for others is amply disposed of by our author. And it is to St. Augustine that we must turn for the solution. Among all the great mystics, he alone, after Paul,

seems to have been able to bridge the chasm between the active and the contemplative life. He was a good business man. He mingled with the world, yet was not of it. "His practical solution of the problem . . . is that, whatever be the superior attractions or the greater intrinsic worth of contemplation, it has to be interrupted at the calls of duty or charity." The claims of the two lives are amply set forth. A striking illustration is given in the lives of Mary and Martha, as recorded in the New Testament. In the tenth chapter of Luke it is written that Jesus entered into a certain village and a certain woman named Martha received Him at her house. Her sister Mary sat at His feet and heard His Word, but did little or nothing to help in the household work. Martha, "cumbered about much serving," complained, whereupon—

> Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou are careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

It is upon this text that St. Augustine quite largely rests his case in favor of the contemplative life; the life of seclusion, of spiritual ecstasy:

> What Martha chose passes away. She ministered to the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless; but all these pass away;

there will be (a time) when none will hunger and thirst. Therefore will her care be taken from her. . . . Martha's part is holy and great; yet Mary hath chosen the better, in that while her sister was solicitous and working and caring for many things, she was at leisure and sat still and listened. Mary's part will not be taken away from her, Martha's will.

THE INNER LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Dom Cuthbert Butler's book, written with such simplicity and sincerity, illuminates in striking fashion, the great problem which has, since the termination of the European war, agitated so many scientific and religious minds. This problem focuses on the question which I have dealt with in the chapter on Terms and Symbols, namely; What is the difference between the outer and inner life? What is real and what is unreal? The mystic turns from the world of unreality—the material dream state—and becomes a permanent resident of the world of reality. The contrast between the two states is now sharply defined. In each individual case we may use our own set of terms to explain our individual meaning. We may call these two states the Unconscious or the Conscious, the Fleeting or the Permanent, the Spirit or the Flesh, Darkness or Light, God or Satan, Reality or Unreality, but it all means the same. In the clever novel

by H. G. Wells, "Men Like Gods," the principal character, starting out on a vacation motor-trip, meets with an accident, and is suddenly precipitated into another world—a world of another dimension, parallel with the one that we are now in. The change is instantaneous and complete. This is only Mr. Wells's manner of dramatizing this idea. In the pleasing form of fiction he has shown that this whole world may be, for aught we know, one of utter illusion, "a dream and a forgetting."

And this is the claim not only of the mystics, but of many others who have come to believe that the senses are poor agents for stability. No doubt the shock of Einstein's announcement of the law of relativity, as dimly perceived as it may be by laymen, has added to the sense of unreality in our present world. When we are told by grave scientific seigniors that all matter is nothing but electrons,[1] which in themselves are eternally invisible; by relativists that the law of gravitation no longer holds good; by Freudians that all the impulses that move us most we are unconscious of; and by worthy gentlemen

[1] In considering the possibility of comprehending the gravitational field and the electromagnetic field together, Dr. Albert Einstein in "Sidelights on Relativity" (Dutton) has this to say: "The contrast between ether and matter would fade away, and, through the general theory of relativity, the whole of physics would become a complete system of thought." Thus the whole material universe is swept away by the chief protagonist of relativity.

like Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle that the fairies we knew in childhood are real and that the friends who have passed over are still acting very much as we are acting, may we be pardoned if we pinch ourselves and begin to wonder if our personal experience is, after all, more valid for us than the theories of so many authorities? But even a slight knowledge of the claims of the spirit as revealed in the lines of the great mystics places the problem of life fairly and squarely before us.

WHAT MYSTICISM IS

Practically, mysticism is an abandonment of the world, a gradual subjection of the claims of the senses, and a corresponding development of the spiritual consciousness. Its realm lies beyond the claims of the intellect, and therefore it has no material validity. God cannot be proved by a syllogism; for that is only a representation of the dream state, of the universal illusion of matter, just as the goldfish thinks he is all sufficient unto himself, and knows nothing beyond his globe.

In actual practice, a human being has only two bets: God, or Mammon. Mammon stands for everything, that is, for the world of the senses, everything comprehended by the senses. God stands for every-

thing not comprehended by the senses. A human being puts his stake on Mammon until Mammon goes back on him. Then, in desperation, he searches for God. The journey is painful, the search long and doubtful. He may be often fooled. Quacks abound. A list of all the cults, healers, nostrums, and man-made religions in the world would fill a city directory. No wonder our young people, bubbling over with youth and health and natural wholesomeness, scorn anything which savors of the so-called other world, especially when they see its hypocritical representatives fighting to the death among themselves.

THE THREE IN ONE

There are three conditions of consciousness:

1. The dream state of material illusion, without education.

2. The same state, with education.

3. The spiritual state (or plane, as it is sometimes termed).

It is necessary to pass through the first two states to reach the third. Those in the third still remain partly in the first or second or both. But even when they are submerged temporarily in either the first or second, they know it. They come back.

Those in the first two states know nothing of the third. They may scoff at it, while actually the spirit is working in them, and spiritual consciousness may come suddenly, breaking the dream state. On the road to Damascus St. Paul passed from one state to the other.

In the second state are many of the "world's" greatest intellects—philosophers, scientists, statesmen, theologians, etc. Many of these brilliant men show enormous confidence and conceit in their own opinions, coupled with scorn of all others not on their intellectual plane. This is the price, in spiritual ignorance, that intellect pays for admittance to its own select circle.

To those who have gone on beyond to the spiritual plane, such brilliant material intellects must ever be appealing figures. It would seem as if the very development of their intellects (illusion) has made them the victims of an increasing spiritual blindness. We cannot, however, always tell. Augustine's life, like that of Paul's, is an example of sudden turning to light. Also, it must be noted that there can be no patronage on the part of those in the third stage over the other two. On the contrary, I should say that most mystics are too much absorbed in their own imperfections, or rather the sense of their materiality, to pass critical judgment on those whom they must

come to regard as fleeting images of a dream state, out of which they themselves have only partly emerged. Then, again, we must recall constantly the spiritual fact that we are handicapped by our form of expression and that the whole problem is essentially impersonal. In short, we cannot consider other human beings as isolated units.

Many men at the head of great industrial enterprises, or carrying out great constructive work, who appear to be wholly immersed in materialism and would scorn any suggestion of spiritual power, are actually following Christ in the best sense. They carry their spiritual ideals concealed. They are like big boys, ashamed to show their real feelings.

JUDGE NOT

So that we cannot dismiss the world offhand, nor condemn it upon the appearance of things. When Gabriel blows his trumpet, there will be a great deal of unseemly scuffling and shifting about. Many of those who have been shouting the Gospel the loudest will have their gas turned off so suddenly they won't even know what has happened to them. Others, now rated as hard-boiled eggs, apparent scoffers, will be dragged—even then against their inclinations—into the celestial lime-light. And it will not be at all like

our lime-light. It will be the spiritual sun of love that sends its rays through the whole spiritual universe.

BE NOT HASTY

On the spiritual plane, the understanding that not only can the senses be transcended, but that all sense material is an illusion, comes slowly. The proof lies entirely in the experience. There is no means of proving this state to those on the material plane. It is much better to remain silent, or else to relate one's experience only to those who ask for it. It is believed or not, according to the stage in which the listener happens to be.

So far as any controversy is concerned, especially about the Bible, that is merely a material thing, an illusion, which we accept or reject in the Bible, depending upon whether it is true for us, as individuals. While those who develop a spiritual consciousness come inevitably to realize this truth, it has remained for the higher mathematicians to confirm it, as already hinted. Einstein's so-called law of Relativity, stripped of its technical verbiage, is nothing but a demonstration of this truth. All things must be relative to the individual consciousness, to which all things must be referred. What else is there?

You, who read these lines, either understandingly or with such scorn as you may care to expend upon them, know one thing absolutely—that it is always up to you to decide between two things. Shall you cross the street or not? Who else can determine this for you? Spiritually speaking, your action in either case is an illusion. It does not matter whether you cross the street or not. You cannot change the universe by any act or thought. If you are wise you will pass your conscious moments in seeking to adjust yourself to it. What you do, in any given instance, does not depend, as the psychologists would have us believe, upon a whole background of racial impulses, stored away in what is termed your unconscious. What you do is determined by God, or if you like, Reality.

You are under orders. You admit no sense of responsibility. And this is strange to the novice, who thinks that he originates his own sin and is therefore guilty, On this point, let me for a moment quote from a very great book, by a very great writer on religion, Baron Friedrich Von Hügel. He writes, in the preface to "The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in St. Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends" that he has been somewhat bantered, although gently so, by a French Jesuit, "for more or less assuming that the mystical sense, or anything at all really like it,

was, if not universal, at least common amongst mankind." He then refers to Dr. Alfred Caldecott, Emeritus Professor and former Dean of King's College, London, who, in a "charming" paper "asked leave to reverence the great mystics from afar, but to be actually helped and expanded by such gleams of intermittent mysticism as shine out from Carlyle and John Stuart Mill, from Charles Lamb and Oliver Wendell Holmes—gleams which are evidently apprehended by Dr. Caldecott as themselves, in turn, simply specimens of what is to be found, more or less, in human life at large." Von Hügel then adds, and this is the point of my referring to him, that: "Nothing could well be more true and important than Dr. Caldecott's protest against straining to find our help beyond, where we succeed in finding help at all: I should have liked now to add a section in which I would have specially utilized Walter Bagehot's wonderful paper upon William Cowper (written out of the fulness of a most touching close personal knowledge) upon the danger, increasingly great in our more and more overwrought, nervously weak and psychically unstable times, of all straining and all strainedness."

In short, the gradual transfer from the material dream state to the spiritual state, after the first awakening, should not be one of anxiety but of a

growing sense of true freedom, one of confidence and rejoicing. And this has been my own experience.

THE INDIVIDUAL IS SUPREME

In a sketchy treatment such as this I can quote no further. And I must not here miss emphasizing my point, namely, that the individual is supreme in his journey, that he is always the center of things. But in passing, I simply wish to show that it is upon faith that the true mystic leans; that his main decision, constantly being repeated, is to give himself up wholly to God, that this is a spiritual intention and that, through all his trial, there is no strain of the sort which comes to those tangled up in material illusions. His serenity is unbroken, though he be crucified daily.

What the relativists refer to as the "Event" is merely the guide-post which recurs in the succession of conscious states.[1] There can be no actual time, because the individual consciousness is fixed. All material phenomena move about it, having no valid-

[1] In other words, the only possible terms for the statement of a law of Nature are events. . . . The new point of view is of special interest because it suggests the possibility of a more complete unification of Nature than any previously imagined. With one hand relativity destroys the throne of matter and motion: with the other it erects an altar to the event.

From "Relativity for All" by Herbert Dingle (Little, Brown).

ity in themselves, either in time or space. If, for example, I seem to go to Chicago, Chicago is merely the "event" in my consciousness—an appearance. I have not moved. I cannot move.

It is this ultimate sense of fixity that gives the mystic his serenity. Says Drummond: "The well defined spiritual life is not only the highest life, but it is also the most easily lived." The proof of all this lies in the fact that there never can be Reality where there is change. Reality, or God, is unalterable, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

SO MUCH DO WE OVERLOOK

The blight of spiritual blindness is an accusation which any one of us may bring against the majority of people in the world without fear of contradiction. We must also include our mortal selves in this indictment, for even the best of us are not so far advanced along the path of spiritual progress that we can afford to lord it over any one else. Indeed, we know little of what we are and of what others are or their possibilities.

But if the demands of truth and duty compel us to be so sternly accurate about our transcendental claims, what depths of humility we must sink to when we consider our blindness with regard to the

commonest facts in our daily lives which we see constantly manifested about us! The sun rises and sets with such obedient regularity that we never notice it. Most of the stars twinkle so modestly and so faintly that we pay small attention to them. Indeed, with the help of Mr. Edison and others, we have succeeded in blotting them out of our nights, thus revealing our superiority over the duly restrained efforts of the heavens to attract our attention. The moon alone appears to have any advertising ability; its nearness to the earth and some of our self-advertisers may have consecrated it to this purpose. It does its best to call attention to its incomparable setting by changing its size constantly. The man in the moon, indeed, is the only publicity man the heavens can boast of. But even at that, he is heeded only by foolish folk who have fallen in love with each other for no apparent reason under the sun, except to perpetuate a doubtful planetary experiment, in which war, crime, and greed are the most conspicuous features. These foolish folk are quite unconsciously true spiritual vagabonds.

AND AGAIN!

And if we thus fail to take account of the sublime laws of the universe, how much more do we fail when

we overlook the relationship between ourselves and the marvelous material creations about us. Consider the automobile, the telephone, the radio, the flying-machine. Consider the system of a great modern business: of a bank, a railroad station, a hotel, a department store. If these mechanical marvels, each one a concrete manifestation of universal law, are all operated through the fluid medium of the human mind, is n't it reasonable to suppose that there must be somewhere a science of living, of personal conduct which, if we could apply it to ourselves, would re-establish the world? In daily practice, we see that good manners are much more important than ability. We seem to succeed in everything else but this. But where man's personal conduct gets mixed up with the machinery he invents, the result is disaster. This is why from the beginning of time, government has been such a colossal failure. And it is through this lack of conduct that wars are bred.

CONDUCT

Such a proposed science of living must concentrate itself entirely on personal conduct.[1] It seems equally

[1] It is recognized that the mind has a far larger influence over the body than was at one time realized. . . . It is recognized further that mental conditions, and in particular religious emotions, are an important feature in the control of health. As a result of all these new points of view the attitude of some of those who are

plain that one's personal conduct is determined by the mind. If this is true, then—just as we create and plan any material business enterprise to a successful result—we must take our minds in hand, so to speak, and find out what is the best method of making them produce, or seem to produce, the best results. These results are not material. They are spiritual. They are not concerned with bodily comfort, but with spiritual tranquillity. The material result follows as a finality.

But it is precisely at this point that our difficulty begins. Nobody else can do the thing for us. It is our own job. We are then doing just what the biologist does—pushing back our investigation as far as we can in order to discover the origin. All roads thus lead to God. Face to face with the seeming unknown, we might easily throw up our hands and quit. Many do. If they are fairly comfortable in their places, with good health and good support, this quest is little more than an idle intellectual game, to be pursued only until it becomes tiresome. Why bother? That is what ails America.

called critics towards the Gospel miracles has changed. They no longer maintain that the events did not happen, but they say they are not miracles.

From "The Life and Teaching of Jesus The Christ" by the Rev. Arthur C. Headlam, C.H., D.D. (Oxford).

WE HAVE TOO MUCH

God supplies us with means of support, with great free works of art in superb galleries, with sublime poetry, with absorbing dramas, with healthful sports, with a moving panorama of sun, moon, and stars, with nature in all its magnificence of color and form, all inconceivably beautiful: with magic transportation, laughter, and, above all, with the companionship of loved ones, and children. And what do we do? We actually attach ourselves to the thought of all these things, apparently for the main purpose of forgetting God, who gives them to us.

But it is at this point that the two great guides to Reality step in. One of them is Father Time and the other is Sorrow. Father Time, himself an illusion if we did but know it (for we are immortal), reminds us that our days on earth are fleeting. His intention is not only kindly, but right. He points out what all along ought to have been quite obvious, that our mortal bodies are frail barks in which to swim permanently upon the great ocean of eternity, and politely reminds us that we must either resign ourselves to obscurity, or else resolve ourselves into a committee of the whole to see whether there may be something permanent in our souls after all. Our

golf game grows steadily worse. The obituary column is a daily nightmare. The "Pay as you Enter" sign that we see on trolleys floats in the air and finally lights down on the entrance to the cemetery, where—with commendable caution—we have bought a lot. Things thicken up a bit all along the line. So much for the office of good old Father Time.

SORROW THE TRUE GUIDE

And the other guide—who may come at any time—is Sorrow. Of all the great occupations in the universe, there is none so complete, so sublime, so perfect as sorrow. Sorrow is a consuming fire, separating the dross from the gold. Sorrow—or suffering, if you like—satisfies the demand of the soul in ways unknown through any other agency. It takes away all restlessness, all hatred, all covetousness and envy, and levels one to the common dust of humanity. It makes one a brother to all other sufferers, linked to them all with the indissoluble bonds of a common and complete understanding, as nothing else can ever do. Sorrow opens the way to God: it is the pathway to Peace, leading from the sense level to the spiritual heights. And until we experience it we are blind leaders of the blind. Welcome sorrow, welcome humiliation, welcome the call of obedience, for it is

through these gateways alone that the absolute is revealed. We then perceive, as through a glass darkly, the slow consciousness of the spiritual heaven in which we are set. Who shall deny us this vision, we who have suffered with the true joy of suffering, not as martyrs, not exciting sympathy, but with the gladness and knowledge born of communion with the eternal?

The mystery revealed in a unique degree and form in Christ's life, is really a universal spiritual human law; the law of suffering and sacrifice, as the one way to joy and possession which has existed, though veiled till now, since the foundations of the world.

VON HÜGEL.

TRUE JOY

And it is this thought of joy that I should like to emphasize at this point in our pathway. Most, if not all, of the great ascetics have visualized the agony of the cross as a permanent thing. The material, physical suffering of Christ has cast over them a spell. If, however, we come finally to understand that matter and physical suffering are nothing—or shall I say a fleeting phenomenon?—then we can see that a true follower of Christ is a joyful messenger. We may well ask ourselves Does God suffer? If Christ is real now, is this reality rendered morbid for us by

the illusion of his physical agony? We must suffer to follow Him, until we come to the understanding of Him. But as we achieve this, true joy comes. "There are two ways," writes Headlam, "two paths for man. The one is the way of the world, the other is the way of life. The one means making worldly success the motive of your life, whatever form it may take for you, and pursuing after that with anxious care. It seems attractive but it means ultimate failure. The other means caring for the things of God and His righteousness. It is the latter which brings man his highest good. The worldly man and the righteous man may pursue the same calling. Both alike may be statesmen, or merchants, or soldiers: it is their motive and their method which will be different."

WHEN WAR WILL CEASE

War will stop when all men regulate their personal conduct on the spiritual plane. Is this an impossible dream? Certainly not. The material upheavals going on all over the world, as the outcome of the war, are as nothing against the steady advance of those spiritual forces which will in time banish evil, revealing it in its nothingness.

Each one of us is the sacred guardian of his

thoughts. Each one of us who harbors daily and hourly good thoughts instead of bad thoughts, loving thoughts instead of thoughts of hatred, thoughts of humility, of obedience, of serenity and praise—each one of us is by so much helping the great cause of God in the world.

THE CONTROVERSIALISTS

If for a moment, we take a brief survey of humanity, as it appears to a spectator, especially if we confine our vision to that select company who are ostensibly trying to make the so-called world better, we shall discover a strange medley. The fundamentalist takes his stand on the literal interpretation of the Bible, believes in the material virgin birth; while the modernist modestly declares that Jesus stands for a pragmatical idea which is quite all right, and the practical—or material—source of which need not be gone into. That is, the modernist dismisses the virgin birth with a lofty, but graceful, gesture. The psycho-analyst regards the whole controversy as a kind of strata of group complexes, one rising above the other, with the unconscious, or subjective mind, as it is sometimes called, a storehouse of these complexes, any one of which is likely to break loose at any moment. The medical men treat the problem

entirely as if each organ of the body was a kind of separate entity. Thus they have developed specialists for each organ; and inasmuch as apparently all the so-called organs have not yet been explored, the number of specialists is constantly increasing.

The doctors are very much like a lot of men who treat a forest for fires constantly breaking out by putting out each fire as it comes up, as if it were originated by itself, but never going back to the source of all the fires. Thus by research, they develop methods of allaying certain forms of disease, only to have other forms of disease created, so that they can also be "cured" by ever recurring new methods of research. Thus diseases, like rabbits, multiply unceasingly. The chain stores have nothing on the doctors, who are constantly engaged in discovering new remedies for those who, having been cured, are as constantly dying off. Along with all this, the doctors really know that the greatest power they have is to allay fear and restore confidence. Thus, with their pharmacopœia, the practising doctors cultivate a bedside manner and acquire a sound technique of practical understanding. In medicine, religion may easily be disposed of by glands, the amount of secretions determining the religious convictions.

THE GREAT STRADDLER

The biologist straddles heredity on the one side and environment on the other, makes new calculations almost daily on the cellular foundation of ova, and hopes that the next discovery will determine the origin of life. The literary critic patronizes God, either by recommending the reading of the Bible as a spiritual *pièce de résistance,* or else denouncing it as obscene. The satirist writes plays which delight multitudes by holding up to veiled ridicule all the things which outwardly they hold sacred, their sense of proportion being so obscure they never even perceive they are laughing at themselves. Newspaper proprietors synchronize belt-lines of papers, and manage to publish the best and the worst of all that is written.

Thus man's boasted intellect, working for thousands of years, has produced nothing that makes him any happier, if as happy, as when he roamed the forests. If viewed rightly, it would be an interminable laughing-stock, and, if it were capable of self-immolation, would hide itself with shame as its own utter incompetence. A distinguished publicist declares that education is weakening the race because it decreases the birth-rate. His opponent declares, with equal passion, that all the uneducated are a

herd of morons. We are thus left to take our choice.

We are always left to take our choice.

As the result of scientific achievements, millions of men to-day are fixed, like flies in amber, in a chaotic network of machinery, which would turn old Moloch green with envy at his infinitesimal efforts to devour the human race. These toiling millions, in the midst of this amazing network of machinery and labor-saving devices, shouted at by fanatics, written at by psychologists, fed by cafeterias, clothed by syndicates, doped by comic supplements and movies, and uplifted by amateur Messiahs in petticoats—they are to a man so restless and unhappy that, in their spare hours, they have nothing to do but to gamble away their time in pleasures so horrible that it would be indecent and cruel to recite them. And the heads of these enormous industries have told me personally that the only way to keep them from destroying themselves further, or more speedily, is to keep them working as hard and as long as possible! And in war, these millions are killed off, for the personal greed of a few world ring-masters who hold the whip-hand. Thus our present system of civilization, created out of chaos, and producing only chaos as the degenerate offspring of blustering intellect, will return to chaos. And all because we are afraid to face God, the only Reality.

REAL RELIGION IMPERSONAL

Real religion, founded upon the absolute surrender of the soul, without any reservation whatsoever, is impersonal. It is devoid of sentimentality. There is nothing soft about it. It has nothing at all to do with this world. To get it, we must rid ourselves of material attachments, whatever they are, at home or abroad. Does this seem hard? Quite. But there is no other way. People are destroying themselves constantly who think there is another way. The majority of human beings combine mentally against any one who wants to live beyond the time they have set for themselves.

The answer to all this lies in conduct, and conduct is more than three fourths of life. It is everything. Just as doctors are fooled by thinking they can ignore the source of a disease and treat only the cellular appearance,—when God thinks otherwise,—so we place our physical actions first, and match our puny powers against the material world. We forget that our salvation depends entirely upon an internal decision, and that, once having made this, all the power of the universe carries us on. All the physical effects follow inevitably. There is no strain. We pay no penalties. We absorb our sense of sin in the spiritual liberty achieved through constantly reflecting our

creator. The reason why so many fail, even with this staring them in the face, is because they read God's message backward. You cannot do that. You must decide to become bankrupt, without any assets at all, *before* your spiritual check is honored by God. You cannot fool him. "I am that I AM."

Thus the way becomes ever clearer. Passivity is power. All things are created and maintained on the plane of the spiritual.

CONVERSION

In this chapter the author defines conversion, tells about his own, and shows that conversion is necessary to a right understanding of God.

CONVERSION

Getting up in the morning is the hardest thing some of us do. I have known lives to be permanently disintegrated because the owner never had the courage to rise at the right time.

This shrinking from doing the thing we ought to do is the basis of that slipping process which grows worse as it gets a harder hold. We are always getting out of doing things.

Looking back over my own life, I think the hardest thing my wife and myself had to do while raising children was to get up in the night and heat the milk. She did the most of it, and I shirked whenever I could. The insistent cry and the befuddled mind are both accessories-before-dawn fact.

Lying in bed mentally is a growing national trait. The multiplication of labor-saving devices, the growing skill with which are presented to us our pleasures, our reading, our transportation—and all these in such manner that we have to do practically nothing ourselves—tend to make us soft.

This tendency largely accounts for the decline in church attendance. Shrinking from the unpleasant is

the most popular indoor and outdoor sport of the American people.

Our religious literature reflects this in a marked degree, The advertising slogan of a candy manufacturer, "Happiness in Every Box" might be applied to nine tenths of our religious books.

It is almost necessary to apologize to my readers for telling them that they must get up early in the morning if they want to get the work done. Our general process of evasion is two fold:

(1) We put off or (2) we get somebody else to do it.

BUT IT DOES

Now, ignorant and cynical intellectuals may deride me for saying that the only remedy for this widespread character disintegration lies in conversion, but those who have arrived at a dead end, those who have tried all the patent remedies, those who, shivering with fear, will bear me through to the conclusion, if they have read thus far and filled in between my lines with honest meditation, must come to realize that there is no alternative. We zigzag from duty to dereliction, but in the long run we choose permanently one side or the other.

The thing we call death, being a fixed thing com-

mon to all and consequently inevitable, we dismiss with commendable stoicism. If that were all, we could afford, with the hard-boiled egg, to roll along on the polished surfaces of material life, taking our chances of a smash-up.

THE PERMANENT AND THE FLEETING

But there is a thing called life, which we cannot ignore, and which concerns us most; and we know that life has two elements, namely, the fleeting and the permanent. We look about us and see that there are a small proportion of the world's greatest men who have a permanent value, who are just as much alive to-day, if not more so, as they ever were. What would America mean to many of us if it were not for the living presence of our Great? Washington, Franklin, Lincoln? We know also, that among many of those personal friends who have lived among us and who have left us in the body, how the permanent revealed in them persists, and although they have passed away, they still live as an important influence in our lives.

In contrast with this, we see in our own lives that nearly all, if not all, these things which at the moment seem to us so ruinous fade rapidly and become as nothing. Our pleasures, our tragedies, our material

desires and misgivings, our sudden joys and griefs, all vanish. Thus we come to see that the material, visible self does n't count in the long run, but that the invisible, spiritual self is the only reality, and that if we wish to harmonize this invisible, spiritual self with the universe, as we feel it in our consciousness, we must, so to speak, look alive; we must face the issue. We must get up and heat the milk in the black night in order that our life of permanence may be carried on. The words of Christ, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," ring insistently in our ears.

A ONE WAY ROAD

I am so thoroughly convinced that in no other possible way except through conversion can humanity be saved (and by *saved* I beg the reader not to limit this word to the narrow and emotional meaning of a revival meeting, but to give it the broad application which covers the whole social structure), that I think it worth while to devote some space to this awakening, which is so commonly misunderstood.

Conversion, as is well known, has been subjected to the close scrutiny and analysis of theologians, philosophers, historians, and psychologists. Perhaps William James in his "Varieties of Religious Experi-

ence" has covered the ground more thoroughly than others, but he wrote before the definite development of the theory of psycho-analysis. I have no desire, nor is it pertinent here, to retill the ground already ploughed up by so many able gentlemen. All I seek is to emphasize one fact, and that is that conversion, whatever its degree of intensity, is conviction. It is not at all a question of belief or even of faith (for faith may be slight), but of certainty. When a man is converted, he is convinced. The world falls away from him immediately, like a discarded robe. He is changed in the twinkling of an eye. You cannot argue with a converted man. The most powerful reasoning of the most profound thinker is as nothing to him. You may call him a fool, a dolt, a fanatic, a moron. He is impregnable. He knows.

THEY ARE ALL ABOUT US

It will be seen from this that there must be a great many more converted people about us than we think. They do not talk about it, because talk would be useless.

Also, they may even conceal it. There is a very lucid admonition of Christ, an instruction not to cast one's pearls before swine.

Conversion, moreover, is not a miracle in the

sense that it is supernatural. Everybody is being constantly converted to something. And yet the conversion I mean, while quite natural, is a spiritual phenomenon solely. It is often startling in its appearance. I mean in its internal appearance. If it were common only to the lowest order of minds,—as in a negro camp-meeting—we should be inclined to discredit it, putting it down to the account of pathology. The fact is, however, that it has been manifested in the lives of the greatest men and women, and has been productive of the greatest practical as well as spiritual results.

So far as my own experience goes and my close observation has extended, I am quite positive that conversion is a universal principle, that it is going on everywhere all the time, but that it is only seen as a dramatic effect acting upon an individual when his real personality and accumulated thoughts about God and himself suddenly reach a climax and overflow into a sudden revolution, or breaking-up of old misbeliefs.

WE ARE NOT MISERABLE SINNERS

Conversion has been called a conviction of sin. It is very much more than that. It is an absolute certainty of one's permanence. All through our

lives, there are things which we hope are true and things we know are true, and we are constantly changing from one base to the other, according as the truth is unveiled. When we come, however, to examine critically, that is, to subject to an absolute test, all the things we know are true in the material world, we shall be amazed to discover that, after all, our so-called knowledge is only a belief.

For example, you know that the ten-dollar bill now in your pocket is good for ten dollars at the bank, and yet there is always the lurking possibility that it may be a counterfeit. It is true that the chances of its being a counterfeit are one in millions; nevertheless, you cannot set aside this faint possibility. So for a great many years, if not generations, the propositions of Euclid were declared to be true. Yet there has now arisen a small group of advanced mathematicians who declare they are no longer true. This doubt, even though it may be, upon your horizon, no bigger than a man's hand, extends to your own conduct. You believe, almost to a certainty, just how you will act in a given crisis. But you cannot absolutely tell until the crisis has come.

I once picked up a hot plate, of very slight value, from a stove and carried it to a table across the room, burning my fingers so badly that it took me days to

recover. I lost in cash many times the value of the plate waiting for my fingers to heal. If, as soon as I touched the plate, I had been logical, I would have said, "It is better to drop this and let it smash, rather than risk my hands." Yet I did not do so.

A bomb with a lighted end was once thrown on the deck of a vessel in a group of sailors. One of them immediately sprang forward, picked it up, and plunged it into a pail of water. The others were paralyzed with fear. Why, among them all, did this man play the hero?

I do not know. A psychologist would doubtless easily explain it.

IT DOES N'T SHOW

Now conversion is that something in the mind and heart of us which bridges over the gap between the probability and the possibility—and makes it become a certainty. It is something within us which seems suddenly to break down everything and which gives us voice to say, "At last I understand." After that, there is no turning back, no matter what happens.

Yet conversion may produce no outward change. The life of a man goes on about the same. He is no

better, necessarily, so far as his immediate conduct is concerned. He is actually in the position of one who has declared himself bankrupt. His job thereafter is to pull things together, to build up a new business from the wreck of the old.

Conversion is not the necessary outcome of any particular set of religious ideas. Buddha experienced conversion. So, undoubtedly, did Lao Tse, Confucius, and Socrates, as well as Paul. There are only two things about conversion which it is necessary to understand: it is always preceded by humility, and it is always the result of the casting off of our sense life. These are closely allied.

Humility is something quite different from a sense of inferiority. Humility not only deals with one's life, but with every one else. Humility is the realization of the fact that we, all of us, as we are, are nothing in ourselves; that our boasted brain power is a quicksand. Along with this comes the sweeping idea that the reality we feel within us is linked up with Permanence, and this permanence is our Creator, or God. Once these two convictions meet, the result is conversion; and that, I suppose, is as near as it can be described. It is certainly amusing to see people who have never experienced it try to describe it.

NOTHING IS REALLY LOST

It should also be understood (and this is very important) that merely because an individual has not been converted does n't mean that he is lost, or that a converted person is better than an unconverted. All human beings are perfect in themselves. If we would only carry this thought about with us, the world would indeed be changed. Besides, it is true. The imperfections which people seem to have are not a part of themselves. You may ask me, if this is the case, then what do I mean by people being destroyed? All I mean is that the very idea of imperfection is only self-destruction and has nothing at all to do with the persons, between whom and reality it stands. If, for example, your friend lies to you, that is not your friend who is lying, but it is discord which steps in between you. He simply allows this discord to remain with him, because he has not been enlightened —that is, he is ignorant by just so much.

CHAOS

All so-called wickedness is nothing but a seething mass of self-destruction, and this is proved by the fact that it is constantly dying out; it cannot maintain itself. If you will examine your friends closely, you

will discover that those you think are hopeless in some respect will suddenly say something disclosing a totally different point of view from what you had previously thought of them. That is their real self, generally hidden from you by clouds of misunderstanding and discord. Therefore, you never *know* what others really are, and for this reason it is not only unsafe, but it is very wrong, to judge them in any way; they may be much farther advanced than you are. The standards you may judge them by may be sense standards, or mere conventionalities set up by the world. The moment any misunderstanding comes to you about any one else, look immediately to yourself. There the trouble lies. Disloyalty, lying, greed, selfishness, envy, etc., in your friends is no part of them. You make these things worse when you give them reality.

KNOW THYSELF!

What happens in conversion is that you suddenly become aware of your real self, the permanent, undying self. And in true conversion, this gives you the opportunity to see the real self in all others. What happens in the phenomena of self-destruction is that the individual gets farther and farther away from understanding of reality, until the real self dis-

appears. I don't know where it goes. I have never found anybody who did. I know that in all cases it is imperishable. If you ask me how I know, I can only reply that this spiritual understanding cannot be described.

IN A NUTSHELL

If the reader has followed me up to this point, he will see that my claim is that

First: Destruction, either in whole or part, is the logical outcome of living in the senses.

Second: The American people as a whole are blind to their danger. The real self of the American people is worthy of being preserved. It will be preserved.

Third: Conversion is not a narrow religious process, but is a basic principle, the lives of a few great men in all ages revealing it.

Fourth: It is only through conversion that one can be saved from unreality.

Fifth: Conversion is an individual affair. It is from within out, and not from without in. It cannot come through the emotions of large groups, but only through the gradual spread of understanding through single individuals outward to the mass.

Conversion may come in the near future, however,

through the union of science and religion, or mysticism, and before concluding this chapter I shall give a brief outline of this possibility. Indeed, I am so strongly convinced that conversion will eventually, and perhaps by a narrow margin, come about in this way, that I regard it not as a possibility, but as a certainty. Let me add that I would prefer to use the word mysticism instead of religion, as it means more to me, but I shall continue with the word religion as it is more easily grasped, although I would not confine its meaning to the narrow materialistic sense. By religion I mean essentially the doctrine of reality, that is to say, the transcendent knowledge in and understanding of the reality of the spiritual life, as opposed to the unreality of the world or the life of the senses. In the sense I mean, conversion is therefore only a conviction of reality.

THE UNION OF RELIGION AND SCIENCE

From the time of Aristotle up to date, scientists have been steadily and progressively engaged in collecting and arranging the known material facts of life. From the data thus classified, the total content of which must of necessity be constantly changing, various principles have been evolved, and these principles, constantly modified by the discovery of new

data, have gone through a continuous process of evolution. In the time of Democritus, the electron had been theoretically hinted at, but not until the higher mathematics had also been developed could the actual track of the electron be followed.[1]

Newton's law of gravitation gave way to Einstein's law of relativity. Euclid gave way before the deadly ultimata of the Italian calculators. In biology, the Mendelian researches followed Darwin, and the germ plasm was the offspring. In psychology, Freud and Jung, largely through the study of dreams, developed what may be termed the pseudo-science of psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, this science has substantially changed the whole literature of thought. Along with these great movements in science (I refer the reader to the voluminous text-books, as I can merely hint at the progress made), there have come enormous improvements not only in transportation and communication (telephone, motor-car, biplane, radio). Considered chronologically and from a bird's-eye

[1] The futility, even of mathematics, to satisfy the demands of the human consciousness, is shown in a sentence by Fritz Reiche, Professor of Physics in the University of Breslau, in his fine book "The Quantum Theory" (Dutton): "None the less, no one who studies the quantum theory will be spared bitter disappointment. For we must admit that, in spite of a comprehensive formulation of quantum rules, we have not come one step nearer to understanding the matter." The heart of the matter is God, if this dear professor did but know it.

view, it is incredible how swiftly these extraordinary developments have come.

Meanwhile, the discovery that all matter is composed of electrons (the full significance of which is not yet realized), together with the rapidity with which people all over the world are coming together in one vast family, all point to one conclusion, namely, that the material world upon which we seem to be fixed is in itself but a point in the universe of infinity. As people thus draw nearer together, they can no longer hate one another, and war will cease. Allied with this gradual understanding on the part of science of the nothingness of matter, will come the gradual spread of the mystical view and understanding through increasing conversions, so that it is no idle dream to picture, in time, the union of the two great contrasting conceptions, the scientific and the religious or mystical. Indeed, they are much nearer now than is supposed. With this, wickedness and discord will fade, and likewise suffering, and it will come to be understood that God has never had any part in this, that it is a phase of unreality.

It is almost needless for me to say that the sole object of this book, as defective as I realize it must be, is to bring out this conception into bold relief, and to furnish if possible a kind of inspiration and guide

to those individuals who may now be on the verge of a deeper understanding (conversion) without knowing it, and who have the necessary courage to break the bonds of the senses.

If certain sections of this book (pessimistic) seem inconsistent with other sections (optimistic), the reader will understand that the whole problem is too vast to pin down to one narrow point of view, and that I am merely looking at it from different angles.

MY CONVERSION

The events leading to my own conversion took place over a number of years. As I have endeavored to make plain in the preceding chapter, this should not be taken in any too emotional sense. It is not necessary, when experiencing conversion, to have convulsions. My first impulse after being converted was, however, to proclaim it to everybody. I had a passionate desire to make all others see what I had seen. But to my amazement I discovered that I could tell nobody. I did not refer to the matter even to the one through whom my conversion came, except in a casual manner. He took it as a matter of course. It did not seem necessary to say anything to him about it.

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Indeed, I was in a most tragic position. I had always been lukewarm in my religious views, and although conventionally a member of the church, I rarely went.

My experience began with a revulsion of feeling over the materialism with which I was surrounded. I had been strongly impressed by the life of Tolstoy, but it seemed to me then, and it does now, that he was wrong in abandoning his family. He says himself that one cannot influence others. However, I must not judge him. They may have driven him out.

As for myself, I determined to turn over my money to my family. I did so, accepting a small allowance. Afterward, I prided myself on this virtue. I did not realize that all I had done was to evade all the responsibility. I was presented with everything I wanted. Later, I saw this smug act in its true light.

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One can scarcely describe a spiritual awakening in words of dust, because the illumination is indescribable.

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So far as my consciousness was concerned, it was precisely as if it had been flooded literally with a great light and this light had swept it clean.

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Everything was utterly new and strange to me, but how wonderful it was! I recall getting up early the next morning and looking out at the sun and thinking to myself that never before had I seen such a sun, never had there been such a glorious sun in the heavens. All objects carried an aura. And I was settled. I stole every moment I could just to be by myself and try to bring back the glory of that flooding. Alas! How little I dreamed what was to come!

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Believe me when I say it is terribly hard to give up the flesh-pots, especially when you are not so bad after all. You are working hard, supporting yourself, and are n't you entitled to a good time? Why should you trouble yourself too much about an unknown God—a God about whom the theologians and the pulpiteers are disputing so continually—why should you trouble about a church which is so filled with smug hypocrites, who would rob you of your last dollar, if they could, while thrusting a Bible into your hands?—that 's the point.

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I have referred only briefly and incidentally to this experience, and in the most imperfect manner. Those who have been through it will understand it.

Those who have not, can have no understanding at all of its meaning.

The real reason why we have difficulty in convincing ourselves of the reality of God and the Spirit is that we have no means of reasoning except that which comes from the senses. In stating this, I mean, of course, superficially. Beneath the surface we have every means, and our souls acknowledge the existence of God even when our mortal minds repudiate him and deny him.

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One individual experience of the presence of God is worth all the polemical literature in the world. Education and the intellect drop to incidents. In every one I meet I can see the reflection of God. It is only obscured.

One of our most dangerous barriers to a spiritual life, it seems to me, is Envy, to which I refer later more specifically. I mean this: we instinctively know all along that we must choose between God and Mammon, but we look about us and see so many men with money, so many successful, all of them having apparently a good time, that we say to ourselves: "It can't be true. All one has to do is to get money enough to be comfortable, control one's self within reason, and that's the easiest way out."

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The fact is that each one of us, under the spell of this mortal dream, fails to understand the sufferings of others. By suffering, I do not mean the kind of agony, the restlessness, the frightful *evading*, which goes on constantly among the successful to which I refer elsewhere. Ask yourself this question: In your past moments of greatest agony, how many have known it? Is it not true that you have held up your head, that you have been impassive, indeed, that, in your outward appearance, you have looked precisely like all those calm people you now meet, and whom possibly you are secretly envying?

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The road is difficult. But have no fear. The outcome is already determined.

"Behold I give unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

This is a true message for all of us who have chosen the straight and narrow path.

"When thou art troubled," declares Thomas à Kempis, "then is the time of merit."

And Paul said:

"If God be with us, who can be against us?"

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SILENCE

Conversion is undoubtedly a kind of stillness. The dream-world condition is one of noise, clamor, constant vibration. Thus, in the slow transfer from one state to the other, there is increasing calm.

One of the most singular and mystifying things about the spiritual life is the fact that it is exactly the reverse in all respects of the material life. In the material life, we think that what we hear and see is real. In the spirit life we know that what is heard and seen by the material ear and eye is unreal.

I could go on down the list and show that this law holds good universally. But just at present my subject is silence.

Silence is the greatest power in the universe. It is even greater than love. This seems impossible, until we consider that love is comprehended by silence. And the reason is not far to seek. For it is only by silence that God can work. Absolute silence is absolute understanding. Beyond this we cannot go. The greatest spirits in every age have understood this law.

Now one of the things that is true of a spiritual law is that it always holds good in the material world. And the reason for this is that the things which happen in the material world—or which seem to happen

—are only manifestations of the spirit. You will, no doubt, ask me if hate is a manifestation of the spirit, if a murder is a manifestation. My reply is that there are two sets of manifestations. For general purposes we may classify them into destructive and constructive; and if we proceed a little farther along this line, we may even seem to contradict ourselves by saying that all destructive manifestations are not manifestations at all, but are only their lack.

It is very difficult for the average person to understand the enormous difference between the merely physical and the spiritual life, in so far as the qualities inherent in human nature are involved. It seems impossible to believe that it may easily require a much higher kind of courage to enter one's bedchamber at night, than it does to go out on the battlefield in broad daylight, with the bullets chipping all about.

The fact is that the actions of human beings on battle-fields are almost purely automatic or even hypnotic. It is true that men suffer before they go into battle, but they have no choice in the matter. "Theirs but to do and die." And it is a matter of record that physical fighting rapidly becomes a kind of habit. Spiritual fighting is a quite different affair.

A friend of mine was engaged in an enterprise which was backed by a man who was many times a

millionaire. This man was a bachelor. He lived in a New York hotel. After putting in a few thousand dollars into my friend's business, which promised to be successful, he had agreed to advance a still larger sum, which he could easily afford to give, or to invest, if you will. That is to say, he was to guarantee the credit by some twenty thousand dollars, as I recall it. His income was between two and three hundred thousand dollars a year.

The papers were all drawn up, and my friend had to have them signed. He was naturally jubilant over the prospect and considered that his struggle to put his enterprise on its feet was now over. As a preliminary, he had sent the papers to the millionaire at his hotel. Several hours later he made his way there.

As he changed from the subway to the surface car, he stopped at a stand to buy a paper. What was his horror to discover that the millionaire had shot himself a few hours before. The act had been consummated in a fit of depression, to which the millionaire was addicted. My friend hurried to the hotel, only to discover that the papers he had so carefully sent were unsigned. The envelope had been opened and tossed aside. The millionaire had hurried himself off in his despair without thinking of my friend's fate. Later, my friend was so overcome by the shock

of this disappointment that he fell ill and never recovered. The last I ever heard of him he was a cripple. He placed too much reliance on a material thing.

UNREALITY

I mention this incident in order to show one instance of a spurious spiritual struggle which resulted in the bodily destruction of a human being who, in normal circumstances, should have been able to lead a happy and peaceful life. These instances are common enough. There is of course a very wide gap between the struggle of a human soul in search of God and the morbid despair of a man who is wandering about in the toils of the dream mind. In the first case, the man has awakened from his dream and is accustomed to battle with evil, willing to lay down his mortal body readily for God. He constantly grows nearer to that peace that passeth all understanding. In the other case, he has not awakened from his dream. Without realizing that, for the most helpless of mortals, there is a Saviour at hand, he yields to his illusion. Personally, I have the most heartfelt sympathy for such cases, knowing as I do how, even in the midst of a spiritual struggle, thoughts of suicide are constantly present.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, in his book "The Meaning of Prayer" has referred to the fact that all of the great decisions take place in the closet, or in retirement. Marshal Foch said at the moment when the war was determined, sitting in his farm-house removed from the battle-line: "I am not a fighter. My business is to think."

We see enormous physical and material bodies removed, we see cataclysms, debacles, great changes made on the surface of the earth, new buildings going up, wonderful dams being made, men mowed down by thousands in a few moments—we see all these things and it is hard to realize that they, after all, are only manifestations of thought. Some one in retirement has planned them all. Napoleon's life is a perfect example. He was able to win the Italian campaign because, beforehand, he had made a minute study of the topography of the country and knew exactly how and when and how fast he could move his armies.

Look on the illuminated faces of Cardinal Newman or Cardinal Mercier. Examine the faces of the Roman emperors. See how brutality and intellect have left their marks there. Consider how men have gone out to martyrdom with smiles on their faces, with peace written on their brows, and you will

get a glimpse of the sublime power that may come to any man in the desert.

ANIMAL MAN IS GAME

Physical courage is so common that, among thousands and thousands, there are but few exceptions. It is easily acquired. Grant relates that at the battle of Shiloh the men who had never been in battle before, and who fled to the rear, were afterward among his best soldiers. One dose of physical cowardice cures itself. The arena of the spiritual is so far above the physical that it is impossible to define the difference to those who have not experienced it.

When one first enters the spiritual life he is insensitive, to which I shall refer more particularly later on. For instance, I can recall even quite recently the fact that going to the theater or playing what seems a simple game of golf could in the beginning by no possible means have been presented to me in the nature of a sin. Yet now to indulge in either of these things would lift them at once to a level of importance which they have not.

I hasten to add that I am giving this only as an illustration of the development of spiritual insight, and not in any way to imply that I myself am any better because I do not play golf or go only rarely to

the theater, or have the slightest objection to either. That, indeed, does not make me any better. And that is why so many people are fooled, it seems to me. The fact is this: that as we come to enter into the spiritual life, the things of the flesh become more and more unnecessary for us. We do not "give up" golf or the theater as something denied, but they drop away because we have no time to pass from Reality. They don't "make good."

REAL CONVERSION

What I mean, when I speak of being converted or of spiritual development, is that the barrier of matter is slowly being removed. The mere fact that, however dimly, I am still able to discern all as being perfect, and that there is no distinction of intellect or learning or breeding—all this is evidence that I have gained that much. There was a time when I instinctively shunned the contact with the poor,—I thought I might rub off some of their poverty; but now I know that they are often—and generally—the ones whose spiritual sight is clearer than mine. Why, indeed, should it not be so?

It seems to me that I am sorriest for those who are in the deepest dream, yet I do not know that I ought to be, because I am in reality here confronted by a

mystery that I do not understand. In some of my old, cynical moments, I used to think of how useless certain people were because they had a lot of money (and I did n't!). But after all, what do I actually know about them?

WE MUST BE PATIENT

It takes a very long, long time, and much prayer and discipline, to look out upon this world and see nothing but God. You have, first, to be blinded to everything you have formerly thought was real. You have to know that it is nothing. Then, when you look out upon human beings, you see them in the right way—you see them entirely divested of their bodies—you see nothing but perfection. What we call their bodies are naught but manifestations. It is a wonderful thing when you first come to know it.

If you say to the Mystic, therefore, "How am I to believe you?" the Mystic replies in the only way that he can, "Do as I have done and you will get the same result that I have."

That is all I can do. In the beginning, I took nobody's word for it. For years and years I was an outward Christian, along with millions of others who went to church occasionally and belonged to what is known as a Christian country. I believed nothing

and cared less. I had tried everything else and found that I got no results. I had gone to church and listened to sermons. Suddenly I experienced a feeling of revulsion at the world. To put it plainly, the world I had known bored me. It not only pained me, but it bored me. I saw that if this was the be-all and end-all of existence, life was scarcely worth living. I then looked into all the philosophies and all the religions, and still got no relief. After all this had happened, I began to pray directly to my Creator. And as soon as I did this, things began to move on the face of the waters.

Very slowly, it seemed; also, at times, very unsatisfactorily. I certainly suffered. I was lost time and again—and found. I went through everything. I had to touch bottom all along the line, until finally, having arrived where I now am, I have a double sense of things.

SEEING DOUBLE

What do I mean by a double sense of things? I will tell you immediately.

First, I saw that all this old world I had loved was actually and absolutely run by God, and that God was actually and absolutely taking care of the people in this world whom I had thought I was responsible

for. Is this a very big thought? Believe me when I say that it is one of the biggest thoughts there is. I had been worrying myself sick over the people I had thought all along I alone was responsible for, and here I saw quite plainly that God was taking care of them in his own way and that I had nothing to do with this but to look pleasant.

Well, I actually did look pleasant. The result of this was that those people I loved, and thought, before, I was responsible for, suddenly (spiritually) realized that a great change had taken place in me; and so they were actually and absolutely hanging on to me and seeking to do what I had formerly wished them to do, but could not get them to do. What in the world (or out of it) is this but the power of God?

THE GAIN

Let me here briefly indicate the gain in a period of about six years, over my former state of unrest, worry, ill health and cynical agnosticism.

1. All my needs supplied with incredible detail and accuracy.

2. The gradual replacement of monotonous material thoughts of the senses with increasing multitude of spiritual ideas, this furnishing a complete

and constant occupation, making me entirely independent of material sources.

3. Enormous increase in volume and capacity for work, and almost total absence of any fatigue.

4. Marvellous results in healing, both of self and others.

5. Absolute and unchanging faith in a Creator constantly present; of real Love and universal power, resulting in growing sense of Peace unruffled by any shifting material conditions.

6. Readjustment of attitude toward world in general, including sense of beauty, freedom from fear, so that all things appear in a new light.

7. Total elimination of all fear of so-called death.

It should be noted that this seven-fold enlargement is by no means a state of perfection. There are periods of suffering and depression—regressions. But the contrast between the present and former state is so marked that it is a constant source of gratitude.

Also, this progress is in line with historical development. In his essay on Shelley, Walter Bagehot remarks: "The whole of religion rests on a faith that the universe is solely ruled by an almighty and perfect Being. This strengthens with the moral cultivation, and grows with the improvement of mankind.

It is the assumed axiom of the creed of Christendom; and all that is really highest in our race may have the degree of its excellence tested by the degree of the belief in it." Indeed, it is only necessary to review the nations of the world; we shall see that those who believe in a supreme Being are most advanced in every particular.

LITTLE BY LITTLE

No, I don't mean to convey the idea that everything is yet perfect. We are dealing here with absolute truth. It is just as much of an exactitude as the higher mathematics. Therefore, I am only laying down a great principle of spiritual conduct. I am showing that all this was suddenly given to me as an understanding of the truth. It remains to complete the process by gradually getting more and more into the light of God's continual presence. I am using symbolic words to express my meaning. I can use none other. I cannot get wholly out of the world. The fact is, actually and practically, I am more in it than ever. I have absorbed the world in Love, transmuted it in my consciousness through God—that is, by means of His power to answer prayer.

Now in doing all this, or in seeing and knowing it come to pass, you must understand that those things

which are eternal are now demonstrated in my consciousness as absolute. They are, Humility, Obedience, Love, Truth, Life. For instance, I no longer have to question myself about Humility. It is n't at all that I now practice humility as I might. On the contrary! But don't you see that this sort of thing no longer worries me, because now I understand humility, and also, this stands for this other self. The Christ spirit is necessary. It is what enables us to get our understanding of God. If now I sin, this sin is something which is not a part of me. It belongs in the mortal life, the dream life. It is nothing. I cannot persist in it because it has no existence. Christ has done just that for me.

NOT MATERIAL

This is not the historical Christ, you understand, the mortal Jesus. I mean that the Christ spirit is something that always was ("Before Abraham was, I AM") and which simply had to be demonstrated through mortality. Public opinion is no longer a graven image. It does n't make the slightest difference to me how many mathematicians may scorn me, or philosophers or deep thinkers or scientists deride me. I beat them right on their own ground, and right under their own eyes I use exactly and pre-

cisely the same methods they use, and prove my case. If they doubt this, let them use the same formula that I use. Let anybody use the same formula. It is open to all. I can prove to anybody that there is a God if you will just follow my formula. I am only asking you to do what any mathematician does when he solves a problem. First, you must want to solve the problem of God. That, of course, is necessary. The rest follows.

All you do is to say: "I advance the hypothesis, good for six months, that there is a God. The attributes of this God are that he created me and that he is running the universe. I will act, for six months, as if this were true. If at the end of six months, after faithfully following this hypothesis, I get no results, then I shall thereafter conclude there is no God and act accordingly."

Is n't that a fair and logical proposition? What next?

Just follow the arrow. And the arrow leads to a closet. All you do is to pray to God, believing that if He is omnipotent, He will answer your prayer. You can say for example:

"O God, if there is a God, I beg that for the space of six months you will listen to me. I am going on the assumption that you are really God. Help Thou my unbelief."

After this, repeat the Lord's prayer every day for six months, and ask for what you want. And then wait for results. Remember that you have got to be honest. If there is a God, as you are assuming, you cannot fool Him. You must, absolutely and truly, act as if he was really God.

No mathematician, when he starts to prove something from a hypothesis, tries to trick himself with false figures. Neither must you.

THE CHURCHES

In this chapter the author contrasts the various churches, and their relationship to the individual. Being collections of individuals, they partake of the same inconsistencies. The problem of going or not going to church is here considered.

THE CHURCHES

Attacks on the churches are too frequently based on erroneous judgment.

When anything is criticized, that in itself is an admission that there must be good in it. We do not criticize the devil.

No critic would be willing to admit that his sole object is to destroy; yet that is the effect of criticism unaccompanied by a statement of the good in the thing criticized.

Instead, therefore, of attacking anything from the outside, we should reverse our tactics and take the position that the thing itself is subject to attacks. We should defend it instead of criticizing it. Thus we not only uncover the evil, but also open the way for the evil to be removed.

This important principle is almost wholly overlooked in ordinary life. Yet a proper understanding of it would revolutionize the world.

WHO CASTS THE FIRST STONE?

There is good in everything, however much it may apparently be concealed. There is good in the low-

est criminal. Impelled by wrong motives, the criminal attacks the state. In return, the state crushes him, stamps out the good in him. I am not here advocating leniency toward criminals; I am advocating understanding. The evil in each case should be eliminated, so that the good is permitted to produce more good. The tares should be separated from the wheat. The state does not discriminate between the tares and the wheat.

The attacks made on all the churches vary from contemptuous indifference to downright abuse.

A great deal of genuine religion flows through all the churches. Owing to differences of temperament, heredity, environment, etc., it is probably necessary to have a variety of churches. This variety of machinery is unimportant, although the machinery of one church often seems ridiculous to the members of another. Also, the expense of separate establishments is considerable.

I shall here make no attempt to write about the churches except as they affect the main theme of this book.

In each church, there is reason to believe there is a group of mystics who have experienced genuine conversion. These constitute a very small part of the membership, and there is reason to believe they may

be wholly unknown to the rest, who attend from fear or desire for social sensations. The general conversion and spiritual development of any individual may have little to do with his connection with any church.

Owing to the fact that few people in the beginning have any spiritual development, it is necessary to attract and hold them by material machinery. The *laissez faire*, or dependent, attitude of the vast majority of human beings seems to make it necessary to place themselves under some kind of authority. Thus the churches have a ritual, either simple or elaborate, according to their traditions, and this ritual is reinforced by the sermon. A church service may indeed be considered as symbolic, but the fact remains that with the majority it is an appeal to the senses. It is too often a spiritual substitute.

THE ROMAN CATHOLICS

However much we may deprecate the bigotry and gross materialism in its elaborate ritualism, and the enormous cruelties that have stained its historical path, we must not forget that in its long line of Mystics, from Augustine to Newman, the Church of Rome has contributed a continuity of genuine spiritual in-

spiration unmatched in any other domain of human consciousness.

Indeed, when we survey any religious institution, Catholic or Protestant, or neutral (like the Unitarian), we must remember that they are all mixtures of reality and unreality, of good and bad, largely human, and never but fractionally divine. This rule, indeed, runs through all things. It applies to language as much as to institutions. For while elsewhere I have laid stress upon the failure of language to convey spiritual meanings, it must be remembered that certain words are lifted out of their material soil and become spiritualized by long association with Reality. Just as the words God, Love, Truth, Christ are all genuine symbols of immortality, so the Roman Church, through the lives of its saints, has created permanent spiritual assets for all mankind in the two greatest words of conduct, namely, Humility and Obedience. It is a pity, however, that, in order to safeguard its material structure, this church should compel those who marry its communicants to sign off their future children to be Roman Catholics. This is un-American in that it delegates to a foreign ecclesiastical institution the power to restrict our liberties. Yet Protestant sects often display fully as much bigotry as this, and for smaller protective reasons.

THE DEVIL STILL HERE

A personal devil and a literal hell are still subscribed to in a number of our states. Indeed, a list of compulsions forced upon simple-minded human beings by religious institutions in this modern and presumably enlightened age is not creditable to the boasted advance of civilization, and scarcely credible to those of us whose only object, in our short stay here, is to love our neighbors and get as close to God as we can. Considering the churches, religious societies, and sects as a whole, and freely acknowledging that each one of them is in some measure a conductor of Love from God to Man, yet it must also be constantly repeated that they are all man-made and therefore, by their rules, may often impede the fullest religious life. Why should so many Episcopalians think that by going to communion once a year (Easter) and denying themselves either candy or cigarettes during Lent, they have thus consummated a cheap bargain with God, *on their own terms?* Furthermore a church is too likely to be dominated by a clique.

Religion is ceaseless prayer, which sets aside no special season in which women, otherwise overcome with social duties, can obtain a much needed rest. There is not a moment in the life of a real religious when he is not keeping Lent. Nobody's Church

would be an ideal structure, dedicated to the continuous communion with Reality.

TRUTH

We are here, at least we ought to be here, to tell the truth, or as much of the truth as we can. This being so, I think it ought to be made plain that life is not an easy matter for any of us. There is such a thing as being a fool optimist as well as an impossible pessimist, and the cheerio pest may become a worse pest than the chronic grouch, who at least has the consideration generally to keep silent.

There is, absolutely and unquestionably, a sustaining power which not only can carry us through to the end of mortal life, but which, under its own conditions, does do this, keeping us, in the main, serene, with our heads well above water and without anxious care. But it may as well be acknowledged that the rare privilege of linking ourselves with this power is not to be had for the mere asking. We must be doers as well as hearers of the word. Upon the very threshold of our great decision and all along the seemingly tortuous path that leads upward, it is not only possible, but in the highest degree comforting to know that we are not alone, that we are only one of a vast company. Herein, in its combined spiritual aspects

undoubtedly lies the value of churches. The world's greatest men and women not only have acknowledged their weakness and despair, but many of them have been saved from destruction by a hair. Buddha fled his home, leaving wife and child. Lao Tse went into the wilderness. Paul acknowledged his weakness time and again. Augustine was saved only by a mother's ardent prayers. Tolstoy was on the verge of suicide. Apparently the same thing was true of Lincoln during his unfortunate love affair. Benjamin Franklin, perhaps the greatest mind produced in America, freely confesses to dishonesty. No one escapes either, on one side, the restlessness brought on by immersion in materialism, or, on the other side, the fine interior struggle which goes on in the souls of those who slowly mount to spiritual heights. The physical evidence lies written broadly in human faces in repose. "Everything is fine," says everybody. Pride puts her smiling mask over every family skeleton.

In more recent years, when tolerance has been a growing asset among people, the intolerance exhibited by churches toward one another would seem to be incredible if it were not so obtrusive. It is here that the greatest difficulty presents itself to the lonely soul looking for light.

In a large city it has been demonstrated over and

over that if some quack lecturer, whose actual purpose is concealed behind an outward show of altruism, advertises free lectures to humanity, telling them how to be happier, his place will be crowded to suffocation. This reveals the pathetic fact that men and women everywhere crave spiritual enlightenment, and are willing to go to an immense amount of trouble to receive it. Contrasted with this we have the spectacle of empty pews in all places where the clergyman cannot preach popular sermons.

THE TWO CHURCHES OF THE FUTURE

The prediction has been made that the two churches of the future will be the Christian Science and the Roman Catholic. Certain it is that these two churches represent the extremes of religious fervor.

The Christian Science churches are filled to overflowing. Their manual teaches them to practise the spirit of universal love. They pay their bills, erect beautiful edifices without effort, heal diseases according to the teaching of Christ, and, owing to the strict discipline of keeping their minds pure, are exceedingly prosperous. Why is it then that they are so jeered at? Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy was a New Englander, and came from the same spiritual and geographical environment as Emerson and Thoreau.

Her book is a great book. One may easily overlook her personality. All great men and women who have been spiritual leaders have been criticized and abused. That is not important so far as Mrs. Eddy is concerned. The only important thing is whether her book is spiritually sound. It has been dismissed by the intellectuals as so much balderdash. That hundreds of thousands of people follow its teachings daily and that the Christian Scientists are the only people who follow literally the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount and the Ten Commandments is a fact that cannot be lightly cast aside. Furthermore, the Christian Science Church has established reading-rooms in all large centers, and its worship of God appears to be not only as practical, but as genuinely spiritual, as any church in existence. Its literature is extraordinary, the "Christian Science Monitor" being one of the best newspapers in the country. This being so, the Christian Scientists cannot be dismissed as unintelligent.

REASONS

I think one of the reasons why the Christian Scientists arouse so much prejudice is because Mrs. Eddy is a woman and because her followers have attempted to deify her. I am aware that this is strenuously

denied; Mrs. Eddy herself combated it, especially after Mark Twain had accused her of it. Nevertheless, the tendency is there.

Another reason is that the Christian Science Church, in its material machinery, has not succeeded in overcoming the same tendencies we see in other churches. That is to say, the church-governing body has not risen above the material to the spiritual plane, but has been shaken by internal dissension, resulting in law-suits, and this has encouraged two outside leaders, who have gained large following, namely, Mrs. Augusta Stetson and Mrs. Annie C. Bill. It must also be remembered that the Christian Scientists have abandoned the position which has so consistently been maintained by all mystics from time immemorial, namely, to live in poverty. While adhering closely to the teaching of Christ in revealing the nothingness of matter and in denying the reality of material supplies, nevertheless many of them live literally in luxury. Christian Science practitioners make large incomes; and while it is not contended that they use their money for anything but the highest purposes, the fact that they encourage expenditure and large earnings raises the question as to how far this can be reconciled with the life of poverty laid down by ascetics and Christians heretofore in all ages. That there are abuses in the Christian Science Church

there can be no doubt, but on the whole, the Christian Science movement is worthy of the highest respect, because it is a demonstration in the great truth that by guarding the mind from all evil communications, by holding the thought of Love, Life, and Truth, by worshiping God only in spirit and in truth, by refusing to follow any false gods, by obeying literally the commands of Jesus—in short, by practising Christianity, a large body of people show in their daily lives the enormous beneficial effects. It should also be remembered that most of the critics of Christian Science have made only a slight study, if any at all, of Mrs. Eddy's book, or have the least idea of what it means. This is revealed by the nature of their criticisms. "We are not Christian Scientists," declares Mrs. Eddy, "until we leave all for Christ." So far as spiritual healing is concerned, this is a subject upon which there is also a great deal of ignorance displayed. It is enormously difficult, for the reason that it is practically impossible to convey, in material terms, any idea of it. All the arguments against spiritual healing are couched in terms of the material. For example, it is said that while a disease which exists in the mind, largely due to nervous apprehension, and which temporarily paralyzes some member of the body may be healed by healing the thought, the same thing would not hold good with what

is called organic diseases. It is also stated that Christian Science is nothing but a panacea for physical ills. The truth is that in Christian Science much more stress is laid on error, as a whole,—and error includes all sin, discord, etc.—than upon physical ailments. These appear to loom larger merely because so many people have experienced relief that they incline to emphasize this phase. I am not a Christian Scientist myself, and this brief survey is not intended to convey any more than a plea for careful examination of the whole Christian Science program before passing judgment upon it. There are in the Christian Science Church, as in other churches, a small number of advanced mystics who reject the material machinery of the church management, and live in retirement from the world.

SHALL I GO TO CHURCH?

In the main, the problem that presents itself to any one who seeks God through the churches is not only what Church to attend but whether to go at all. The argument in favor of church-going is of course very strong, very insistent. It is thundered from the pulpit week after week. It declares it to be our duty to maintain the church, that, without the church,

society would dissolve, that our children can be saved only in that way. What is one to do?

It is not altogether what one gets out of a church, but what one puts into it. Many people regard a church as they would a club. They are willing to pay a certain amount every year for insurance against future punishment to their children or possibly to themselves.

WHY NOT ABOLISH THE CHURCHES?

The fact is that the churches must exist for the good they do to individuals, and when they fail in this they fail altogether. It is not a selfish question therefore which prompts an individual to ask himself "What can I get out of church?" for the reason that the church exists only for the purpose of supplying him with something he cannot get in any other way. His example is of course a factor, for it may encourage others. But why encourage others to do something which has no benefit for you, and would not have for them? There is something doubtless to Bernard Shaw's suggestion, that if all the churches were abolished, then such a spontaneous need would arise that the right kind of a church would rise to fill it.

It seems to be that this whole question of the churches is one of dependence. It harks back to the problem I have referred to in my chapter on suicide, although at first sight this may seem very strange.

It can be put in this way: Shall I seek God alone, or shall I depend on some one else?

In modern life, the tendency is for each one of us to become a specialist, and from the surplus accumulated to buy what we can as far as this surplus goes. In other words, we become mollycoddles in all respects but one. I say this is the tendency. Of course, there are limitations, even to the art of being a mollycoddle. Yet, when we come to examine ourselves critically, we may be astonished at the pitiful spectacle we present. There is scarcely anything that we know how to do except the one thing which supports us.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

We cannot make the spectacles we wear, nor the clothes. A great many of us have learned to run motor-cars, because the business of running one has been reduced to a few simple motions. But if one goes wrong, we are utterly incapable of setting it right and rely upon the nearest service man. For our information we rely upon newspapers, as also we do

for our opinions. It may be said, I think without contradiction, that most people rely upon the churches for their religion. This is certainly true of both the Roman Catholic and the Christian Science churches, to both of which the most rigid obedience is required, although quite naturally the requirements differ radically. It is less true of the Protestant churches. Take them as a whole, most of them may have a rigid creed which in actual practice is not lived up to. For example, a body of Presbyterians who are attracted to a minister of another denomination may ask him to preach to them, although his belief is not in accord with the letter of theirs. This has happened. Inasmuch as there is small choice among all of these churches so far as creeds are concerned, the confusion comes where we see them fighting over minor differences and all at sea about the divinity of Christ. What the average man wants, whose intelligence has been laid dormant by so many labor- and mind-saving devices as our modern civilization presents, is to have a definite religion presented to him, one that he does n't have to think about. When he gets his life insured, he is handed a policy and, by reading this over and also by his general knowledge of what insurance companies must provide, he knows precisely what he is insured against and how much money his heirs will get when he dies.

CUSTOM-MADE CONVICTIONS

Now he asks for the same assurance with regard to his religion, and, as his time is much occupied with his specialty, he gives just as little attention to his religion as he can spare. That is, he goes to church once on Sunday and says his prayers once or twice in consonance with others. Occasionally he goes to a church entertainment. He is then classed as a church member and a Christian. Frequently he does not go at all, allowing his name to remain as a member on the church roll and paying whatever dues may be necessary. In this case he is still a church member and a Christian. With the two exceptions I have mentioned, the churches condone this sort of thing, because their position is not strong enough to do anything else. To keep this kind of a Christian within their fold, they excite his attention as much as possible by entertainments, moving pictures, musical programs, and so on, but especially by sermons. Thus a first-class preacher is greatly in demand and is eagerly bid for by churches, very much as baseball players are passed around the circuit. An eloquent preacher will command a large following, just as any good actor. He himself may be, and generally is, a fine type of Christian, sincere

and devout. That does not detract in the least from the fact that the majority of people who hear him take their religion from his lips just as they sustain themselves by reading novels and editorials or eat the most palatable and nourishing food.

THE FUTILITY OF IT

Let us now consider the problem of the individual when, through some sorrow or other calamity, he suddenly awakes from his mortal dream and is confronted by the great interrogation of life and death? This is the problem of you and me. We know that life at best is a continuous struggle, and that it takes every ounce of courage in us to keep going. We want a religion suddenly, maybe, and we want it mighty bad. We are in a very real fight. There are moments when we feel like shooting ourselves. There are other moments when we fairly sink under the load, and particularly there are so many people we love dearly so close to us that we cannot well turn away from them. We feel suddenly our utter inability to keep going, and it is at this moment we send out our S O S across the waters. These moments doubtless occur sometime to each and every one of us. They sweep over us generally without warning.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

Are we then to join a church, have our names on the roll, listen to a sermon once a week, and have all our problems settled for us? What is religion? we ask ourselves.

Both the Roman Catholic and the Christian Science churches, in exactly opposite directions, have, it seems to me, fulfilled the requirements of individuals as I have stated them. Both churches require absolute obedience. The difference between them is, of course, immense. The Roman church requires confession, and gives absolution. The Christian Science requires immolation, constant guarding of one's thoughts and actions, a literal doing of the word. In the Catholic church the priest provides the consolation; in the Christian Science church, the practitioner. Lourdes testifies to the miracles of healing performed by the Catholic saints, and the "Christian Science Sentinel" publishes each week a record of healings in Science.

In both cases there is dependence.

I have no quarrel with any one who belongs to either of these churches or to any of the others.

My claim is that something much more is necessary on the part of any man or woman who seeks God in the right way. Your business is directly between you

and your Creator. Nothing else should be allowed to intervene. After you have once established this relationship, then the church doesn't matter, only so far as you can further its spiritual aims or it can further yours. Belong by all means if you care to. As a material institution, however, it can have no validity for you.

THE BIBLE

In this chapter the author shows that the common method of reading and studying the Bible is not natural and tells why he thinks the Bible is of such supreme importance.

THE BIBLE

In stating the case for the Bible, I am by no means unmindful of the people who have been driven away from reading this book by some of its advocates—by the profound scholars who have written so many deadly introductions to it, by some of the earnest, but misguided, Sunday-school teachers who have succeeded so successfully in robbing it of all interest and charm, and by that impregnable band of Biblical efficiency experts who insist that you must not read it unless by breaking through the barbed-wire entanglements they have erected in front of it.

Now occasionally one meets a human being possessed of that doubtful abnormality, a mathematical mind, who takes to any system or fixed method as a duck takes to water. Such people revel in puzzle departments and all sorts of horrible exactitudes; and our good friends who devise methods of studying the Bible seem to do so in the conviction that these mathematical minds are the only kind in the world. Personally, there is nothing I like better in an idle moment than to pore over statistics, tables of

population, lists of dates, and so on, although I forget them immediately, this habit doubtless having been started in my early traveling days, when there was the necessity of trying to probe the esoteric intricacies of time-tables. In some such ambitious spirit I once picked up a Bible lesson for the day. The directions were, first to read certain passages. I presume these passages had some relation to one another; there was doubtless a thread of interest, a theme, which was suggested, but which my feeble mind failed to visualize. I conscientiously read the passages referred to, one after the other. At the end of the pamphlet was a list of questions, and the idea was, after reading the text, to answer offhand all these questions. If you want to have the conceit taken out of you, try this method of studying the Bible. Was Elijah invited more than once to eat? What further work did the Lord give Elijah to do? Were there other prophets at this time in Israel?

BIBLICAL STUDY TRAFFIC

To save my life I could n't recall how many times Elijah had been invited. The trouble was that when I read the text I did n't know beforehand that this question was going to be asked. Without the slight-

est ambition to encroach in any way upon the territory of the efficiency experts, I should say that the best thing to do would be to read the questions first. Then, when you read the text, you will be certain to get the answers right. Does n't that strike anybody as reasonable, assuming, of course, that the idea is to get the answers right?

As for the other work that Elijah had to do, and all the other prophets there were, dear me! surely one ought to know these things—afterward—but one does n't. Your mind gets dizzy. A fairly intelligent man, able to read and support his family in comparative ease, can have ten counted over him so easily, after being the victim of a process like this, that you could n't induce him to read the Bible again without a mandamus—whatever that may be.

If the experts had their way, however, I make no doubt that, in the course of time, they could produce a body of standardized Bible readers who would know, after one perusal, how many prophets true and false there were in Israel and the number of times Elijah dined in a given period. The main difficulty at present is that human life is short, and Bible reading has not been made compulsory. Quite a number are taking advantage of this latter fact.

THE APPROACH

The approach to the Bible has been made so difficult that so long as one does n't have to go along, one simply does n't. The people who don't are always in the majority. And to add to their numbers appears to be the sole object of the people who do. The people who do have invented so many ways of studying the Bible that altogether too few care to read it any more, and they have invented so many ways of consuming time that it is becoming increasingly difficult for many of us to develop our mental resources beyond the point of actual necessity. The movies involve no sort of exertion: their semi-darkness even relieves us of the distraction of submitting to light vibrations other than those that come from the picture. We do not have to meet the movies half-way. They do it all. There we sit, immovable and wholly inert, our minds being varnished with a veneer of emotionalized and sentimentalized action in what is regarded as proper proportions for profit. And this is true of other things; our bodies are carried hither and thither by motor-cars without exertion: our opinions are delivered daily in assorted lots—we have but to make a selection, as one picks out his favorite bonbon from the confectioner's gilded box. Thus in all respects,

except those in which we are obliged to maintain our bare existence, we are a majority who don't. If we could hire people to breathe for us, as we hire them to think for us, we would certainly do it.

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Nevertheless, there is hope. Most Americans have a practical strain, a souvenir of pioneer days, and if you can offer them some practical inducement for doing a particular thing, they will invariably respond. The trick is to put it to them in such a way that they will see it; and this is what I am trying to do.

I firmly believe that the Bible is not only readable, but can be made readable for great numbers of people, if they can rid themselves of systems and all the things that have been written in its favor. How do I know this? Because I 'm like the unlettered sailor who, when he was asked how he knew the world was round, replied that he had been round it.

First, then, as to the inducement. I must make this evident, or my whole case for the Bible falls to the ground. To do this I have only to call upon our common experience, and our common experience shows us that nothing is of any value to us that has not come from our own exertions. What we accomplish with our own hands, hearts, and minds is what draws the

most regular interest, and is what we rejoice in most. If we permit ourselves to be overcome by dull routine, to be enslaved by those custom-made time-killers by which we are surrounded, then we are nothing better than dope-fiends. An acutely sane English writer, Arthur Clutton Brock, in commenting upon this tendency, once remarked that:

> We must be aware of the world and not merely of our own homes. And those who say that if each of us performs his private duty, all will be well, are talking mischievous nonsense.

Just as the routine of home and private affairs transfixes us, to the exclusion of civic duties, so do we become fixed in the network of factory-made pleasures and opinions that surround us. This modern mental and moral narcosis actually and quite naturally prevents us from realizing what we are missing, except only in part. But consider for a moment what it is that is really saving us; for even as bad as our condition thus appears to be, we are actually saved by our intangible impulses for better things, obscured as they sometimes are. In reality, by a sort of subconscious process, we are constantly and half unconsciously throwing off these narcotics: so we do attend public meetings, we do make and start out upon good resolutions, we do read at intervals a good book,

we do go to church—in short, like half-lame flying-machines that bump along the ground, we are continually pointing upward, trying to rise, and this very tendency keeps us from becoming utterly enslaved. We seem to know instinctively how much we miss, though unable to correct ourselves.

Says Dean Inge: [1]

> Secularists ask impatiently what Christianity has done or proposes to do to make mankind happier, by which they mean more comfortable. The answer is (to put it in a form intelligible to the questioner) that Christianity increases the wealth of the world by creating new values. For example, if women were sufficiently well educated not to care about diamonds, the Kimberly mines would pay no dividends and the rents in Park Lane would go down.

Now the truth is that there is no way in which more new values of the right kind can be created than by the reading of the Bible, and it is practically impossible to adumbrate the sensations one gets out of it when it is read in the right way. This is because all of our conscious acts come through language. We can not think without words: words are the basis of everything we see and feel and do: and the Bible is the greatest collection of words in the world. Is it interesting? Well, probably you think you have read

[1] "Outspoken Essays."

something new when for days you have followed in the newspapers an "up-to-date" tragedy. If you think that, take five minutes off and read the second chapter of the second book of Samuel.

IGNORANCE

In a running race to see who can mispronounce the greatest number of Biblical names in a given time, I 'll take my chances with anybody. When I once get a name, like Ahab, fixed in my mind, I have to keep reading it over and over and round about it, to feel that I could mention it casually, even in the presence of a Sunday-school superintendent, without getting stage-fright. That was what kept me from reading the Bible at all in the beginning. I was afraid that I might get talking about it inadvertently to some one, and he would know more about it than I did. Then I got reckless, and began to read it for pleasure, just as if I did n't care how little I could learn from it. I discovered that the Bible has several good points, which should appeal to practical and ignorant people like myself.

It is the most economical book in the world, for it renders all other books superfluous.

You can get it in almost any size you want. It comes so small it will fit into a waistcoat pocket. If

you want something to carry around for exercise, it comes up to ten or fifteen pounds.

So far as I have been able to discover, there is n't a single word in it that you can not understand as soon as you look at it.

Any part of it gets better every time you read it.

Any one who has had the strength and courage to read thus far is probably bursting with a feeling of premature revenge over the expectation that I am now going to spring upon an unsuspecting world a new system of my own of reading the Bible. Be easy in your mind. I am not. A gentleman should be defined as a man who does n't insist upon your eating the same things or reading the same books that he does.

ONLY ONE WAY

My principal discovery about the Bible, indeed, as far as I am concerned, is that the only way to read it is without any system. My own experience, as I intimated in the beginning, is that you can not get something for nothing and that a thing has value in proportion to the time and thought one is willing to put into it. I am by no means for destroying the newspapers, the movies, or the motor-car. All these things, I suppose, are necessary as backgrounds in which we can build up our characters by knowing

when and how to resist them. As Mr. W. S. Gilbert has so delightfully observed, one must not rely altogether upon an exclusive diet of candy. To become addicted to a routine, to a particular sort of home life, to any habit that tends to make us self-centered and takes away from our power to be of service to the world at large—this is not necessarily immoral—it is stupid. There was a woman in New Jersey who served a long term in jail, when it was discovered she was not guilty of the crime for which she had been imprisoned. She refused to leave the jail, however, on the ground that she knew no other way of life, and, as the authorities had fixed this method for her, there was doubtless on their part an obligation to keep her on as she was. Many of us are no better off than this woman. We have put ourselves in jail for life, and don't know it.

A GREAT OCCUPATION

When I found I could read the Bible according to my own lights, I found I had an occupation that created more new values for me than anything I had ever tried. Perhaps the principal difficulty one meets in reading it, at first, is the fact that it is so closely written. A modern writer (just as I am doing now, shame on me) is always at some pains to explain his

idea. He tries, just as they do in the movies, to make it as easy as he can for the reader. This is, of course, due to competition, the one who succeeds in making it easiest or most obvious for the reader being the one who has the greatest number of readers. That is why Harold Bell Wright has more readers (at present) than H. L. Wilson. But the Bible is not competing with any other book. It is the bedrock foundation of all our literature, and therefore if you want to know anything, the Bible is where you must go to find it. It contains all the latest news. No newspaper man, no sage or scientist, no philosopher or statesman has ever been able to get up early enough in the morning to get ahead of the Bible. Being so compactly written, without a superfluous word, it cannot be overlooked, and it must be read without any thought that one may acquire a reputation for having read it; and that is why it cannot be read by any method or system. It is too big for systems; it comprehends man himself and all his thoughts. It is a great gallery of superb human portraits.

It must also be remembered that science itself has, by disposing of time, reinforced in the most dramatic manner the whole chronology of the Bible. We can now understand perfectly that this chronology is only a complete record of man's consciousness.

SCIENCE AGAIN TO THE BAR

Let us consider science a little further. Let us remember that science, having disposed of matter, leaves us looking out upon a world of utter illusion, upon a world of nothing. Thus we are forced back —are we not? to look inward, to search our innermost souls, and there to find—God. And it is this God, who dwells within us, who is the Author of this complete book of life. The whirling world about us is very much like the motion picture thrown on the screen, back of which is—nothing! Where did the picture come from? Out of our consciousness, in the beginning, because we should not now be able to perceive it unless there had existed within our consciousness the necessary conditions of receptivity. We built up this illusion of the world very slowly, from childhood. So we build up the spiritual content. We break through our original natures, gradually, into the light—and into the realm of love.

It is through the constant reading of the Bible that we learn not only how to love universally, but we learn how to emerge into the presence of its Great Author. The bars that lead to every path of thought and divine aspiration are let down, and we finally come to see what the real issue is, for this is what the Bible gives us. We see that what we are fighting for

is Reality, the reality of the spiritual life that, in its higher development, transcends the material world, and gives us the final triumph over the world of unreality, which even now the scientists are proclaiming to us, as if they had discovered something that the Bible did not teach us. Thus all things move in circles and we always come back to—God.

WHAT WE GAIN

To be specific in a spiritual sense, the great gain in reading the Bible, as a definite and practical help to the solution of our personal problems (no matter what these are) lies in this fact: Our moments of deepest discouragement are due quite largely to a feeling of utter loneliness. We cannot tell our troubles to others, any more than they can to us. We have tried this and it does n't work.

Still, it is true that in our moments of deepest discouragement, our greatest source of strength is the knowledge that others are going, or have been, through the same thing and pull through. This sustains us. We are one of a vast company. When, therefore, we pick up the Bible and read in the plainest terms and the purest English an accurate description of our own secret struggles, the power thus opened to us is something which only those who have experi-

enced it can realize. Every note of discouragement we have, and every aspiration, will be discovered mirrored for us in the Bible. Frequently the direct personal messages we get are startling in their simple directness.

We may consider it as literature and as a kind of character guide. But it is much more than this. In the light of one's deep spiritual experiences, its divine source cannot be questioned for an instant.

THE INDIVIDUAL PROBLEM

In this chapter the author once again reverts to the Individual Problem, and, in a series of questions and answers, furnishes a kind of guide to the true spiritual life, showing its necessity.

THE INDIVIDUAL PROBLEM

If we compare the spiritual life to an ideal tour, and use a blue-book as a commentary, we shall begin by stating that it is first absolutely necessary for you to know how to drive your car, and the act of conversion is the parallel of this. Conversion is understanding. You discover suddenly that you have an enormously extended power which may take you easily over every grade, but which, unless you use caution and skill, with your still imperfect sense of direction, may dash you to pieces. This is no criticism of the power, which you recognize as universal. It is only that a small part of it has been intrusted to you, with certain privileges. It is then up to you to use it in the right way. What you do with your power means everything. There may be others with you, but you must not allow them to distract your attention. Your road-map is in front of you, but you realize that it is upon your own eyes, your own courage, your own accumulated experience that you must rely in all cases.

IT IS YOUR PROBLEM

You see other Christians, who have never learned to drive, being driven by hired chauffeurs. Do you wish to be carried in that manner? You do not. At the end of the route is some one who will ask you a few leading questions, among others, "What right have you to depend upon other people for your progress?" You are truly and practically a spiritual vagabond.

This illustration has its defects, and I am sincerely sorry that I cannot provide a better one. So far as the spiritual life is concerned, we literally depend upon nothing. We sit still and work out our problems alone, with God's help. And the first thing we see is that we are God in the sense that our limited perfection is part of the unlimited perfection of God.

What happens thereafter is this: every problem which comes up in our daily lives, *no matter what it is,* can thus be solved by ourselves alone.

This is an enormous gain.

Not every problem is thus solved immediately. That would be impossible, because one of the requirements of our progress is that we shall labor and wait. We must learn patience. But little by little, as we go along, we come to find out where the

source of power is, and to fit ourselves so that it may flow through us. This is a very wonderful gain; indeed, it is so inexpressibly wonderful that the mere contemplation of it must fill us with awe.

Consider for a moment what it means to have every problem solved, here or hereafter, so that there nevermore can be any doubt of it.

That is precisely what happens. The price? Self-abnegation. Absolute surrender. Living on the spiritual plane by keeping yourself unspotted from the world and this without strain.

The real nature of suffering is but little understood. When we know what suffering means and that it is the only medium through which we can gain peace, we welcome it.

Suffering breeds patience and patience breeds hope. Read Romans and you will get the answer.

IT FILLS ALL REQUIREMENTS

The spiritual life furnishes an occupation which at once removes one from all other occupations, no matter what they are—work, pleasures, intellectual diversions, etc. It seems almost incredible that this should be so, yet it is so.

Also, the spiritual life, in addition to the occupation referred to, adds all other things instead of tak-

ing them away. It is by far the easiest life there is. It is a life absolutely devoid of all personal sense of responsibility. This may be difficult to understand, yet possibly a few words will make it plain.

We know that God is running the world because we have discovered that we are a part of God ourselves, and the knowledge of this fact enables us to understand that God is supreme. Therefore, we have no sense of anxiety over anything. Furthermore, we have no sense of anxiety about ourselves. We know that nothing can hurt us, and that we do not sin, because sin itself is no part of us. If we do appear to sin, we immediately put it up to God. We are chastened through the gradual uncovering of our ignorance.

How is this accomplished?

By prayer. We are dealing and are in constant communication with headquarters. There are any number of times—even during one day—when we are not sure what to do. When we are not sure of any action to take, then the rule is do nothing—we just leave it to God.

Don't you make mistakes?

Constantly. But we don't worry about them, because this is our means of progress. We are progressing all the time.

How do you know this?

By the fact that we are becoming less and less dependent on material things.

Suppose you are suddenly confronted by some great calamity—well, say a death, or a loss of fortune? What then?

We suffer just like any one else. But the difference between our suffering and others is simply that we know, even in the very intensity of it, that it will pass. Furthermore, we know why it is.

But if this is the case, and you go on suffering, from one suffering to another, without end, what is the ultimate gain?

The ultimate gain, and the immediate gain, over the former blind suffering is so great as not to be defined in words. The former suffering led or might easily lead to self-destruction, even fractionally or wholly (bodily). This suffering we endure now is accompanied with a parallel peace which indeed passeth all understanding.

But are you never irritable? Do you never lose your temper?

Oh yes. We are precisely like any one else outwardly. No one would notice wings sprouting on us. From the outside the difference is so slight as apparently not to be noted. Above all, we are not superior. Oh no! We are just the reverse. Not that we are inferior, but we come to recognize that

we are nothing so far as our material lives are concerned, and are everything so far as we are a part of God, and we know that all others, even those whom we formerly hated, are just as much a part of God as we are.

But what do you do when you want to fill in your time? If you don't really enjoy material things, and the spiritual life is not to be described, what can this occupation be which is declared so fine, if there is apparently nothing to it?

The answer to that question is really very simple. Our occupation consists in an absolutely new conception of all material things. Thus the ugliest person in the world, formerly, may now easily be beautiful. All things are changed for us. The bad, the vulgar, all the destructive things, are for us blanks. We see them no more. We see only the beautiful.

And our occupation is one of constant praise. We praise our Creator, not in any psalm-singing language, but with all the discernment in us, and at the same time we express our gratitude. We do this by trying in every way to follow the teaching of Christ. Occupation! What could be more complete?

You say that when a problem presents itself, you put it up to God. Just what is meant by that? Explain the process.

All that happens is this: On the spiritual plane everything is determined by our previous thought. That must first be understood, and can only be understood, by experience. For instance, a fear we may have to-day will manifest itself later on in some material manner, usually discordant. Therefore, what we think now is all important. When confronted by a problem, the first thing we do is to dismiss it. By this I meant that we throw it off on God. Not that we shirk it! On the contrary, we meet it squarely by facing it spiritually. We literally hold dominion over it by thus facing it. The next thing we do is to wait. That is, we allow God, seemingly, to do the work. Actually, nothing is done at all, the reason for this being that the problem is really no problem. It actually solves itself by being thus ignored. There is never any answer to silence. An example? Suppose you have a note to meet to-morrow morning, and no money to meet it with? Well, you do nothing. You leave it to God. Now what happens depends of course on your previous action, or apparent action. What was the condition of things previously which made it necessary for you to give a note? Why did you not provide for the payment? You say that circumstances were such, etc. Very well. Remember that now you are absolutely in the hands of God. Did you do wrong previously? Then you must suf-

fer. Do not be afraid to suffer. Nothing can possibly hurt you. If there has been error in your thought, then this must be removed. God will remove it if you let him alone. If the note is not paid, that is right. So the answer will be made to this question later—possibly in a month, possibly in six months. Then, looking back on the whole affair, you will see quite plainly that by leaving it to God, the best solution came. What that solution may be I can not tell you, because I am not, nor can any one be, familiar, as God is, with all the circumstances.

Do you believe in a personal God?

Certainly; and yet that is not precisely, or even adequately, the answer to that question. Much difficulty has been caused by this, and I shall therefore try to make it plain. The first thing to be understood is that God is everything. He is all things to all men. He is a person to love more intimately, more intensely, than any one you have ever known. But this is only one phase of your thought. The truth is that God is a spirit; he is universal, he is all there is. There is nothing else but God. Therefore, any way that you choose to think of Him is the right way, if it be with love.

But is n't this too personal on your part? Is n't it wrong to be thinking so much about yourself? Also, why should you give up all material things, many of

which are wholesome? Besides, why should we give up those we love, our families and friends?

These objections, and many others, will constantly assail you as you go along. They are merely the voices raised by your own erroneous thoughts. In each case the answer is the same. You "give up" only in the sense that you come to realize the nothingness of all matter, and this includes the false personalities of those you love. What you really do is to give up evil, and retain good. Take some one you love very dearly. At present, you are so firmly attached to him that the hidden thought that you may lose him is constantly present. What you are doing is to worship him as a false image. You do not understand yet that what is real in him never can be separated from you in any degree. The moment you give up the material part in him, however, and refuse to bow down to it, or be bound by it in any way, then all fear of separation ceases, because you know that both he and you are immortal, and can not be separated by bodily death.

Well, if this is true of one person close to you, how about others not so close?

It is true of every one. In conversion, what happens is that you put off a sense of unreality, and enter into spiritual contact with a vast host of those who are immortal.

How do you actually know this to be true?

You gradually come to know it spiritually. No matter where you go or what you do, you are a part, a reflection of all the host of heaven. You feel their presence spiritually. Moreover, after you have developed a sense of the spiritual, in many little ways which I cannot explain in material language, it is manifested to you that you are only one of many in the spiritual universe. Understand that this is not spiritualism, which generally means the materialization of bodies.

But do you mean to say that with all the spiritual development you have just outlined, you can still go on just the same, doing every-day things in the same old way?

Certainly: only, to be truthful, you really do them in a new way. It is largely a question of common sense. Real Christianity is the quintessence of common sense. Christ was the most sensible man who ever lived. He always brushed aside everything but the essential point.

Well, I wish you would explain about his miracles. If he raised people from the dead actually and including himself, and if, through the spiritual law he thus demonstrated, people are still being healed of all kinds of diseases, why is it that any one dies, and why is it that even the healers themselves get

things the matter with them which they cannot cure?

These questions are the main stumbling-blocks to the great majority of those who stand upon the threshold of the spiritual life, who really want to enter, but are deterred because they seemingly can not be answered. Yet the answer, to those who are already entered, is perfectly simple. One answer is this: Put aside all your doubts, take a chance, have faith, and just make up your mind you will trust God enough for the present until you finally understand. If you do this, it is very much like walking on the water. Try it and you will find it works. That, I repeat, is one answer. Another answer is, you must first come to understand the nothingness of all matter. This is not easy, considering that it is from matter your consciousness has risen; it is like repudiating the source of your consciousness. This understanding can come only very slowly, by meditation, suffering, constant readjustment. To the logical material mind, that is to say, the literal mind, science has recently provided a great help, as I have shown elsewhere, by demonstrating how matter is composed of invisible electrons. When you finally get firmly fixed in what, for convenience sake, I may term your spiritual consciousness, this idea that matter has no validity (and by matter I mean flesh tissue, visible personalities, etc.), you will then see the miracles of Christ in their true

light. You will understand that when he healed sight and hearing, when he cast out devils, when he healed paralysis, etc., he was merely restoring to the persons treated a real sense of their spiritual selves, while at the same time destroying a false sense of imperfection. In order to make the demonstration complete, he voluntarily submitted his material self to bodily destruction, and then, in the resurrection of his body, revealed the nothingness of matter in the only way possible. Now so far as others are concerned, how they are healed, or why they may suddenly succumb to certain so-called diseases, we do not know, because all others are illusions. Your entire concern, in the answer to this supreme question, is with yourself alone. If you are afflicted with a so-called disease, your faith can cure you of it. Try it and see. When it does n't work, this is due to some thought imperfection. And that is all you need know.

Does this mean that the mind controls the body?

No. There is a great deal of popular confusion about this question also, and I may as well explain it now. Both mind and body, in their ordinary working, proceed from material sources. So far as the mind itself is concerned, and by this I mean the brain, the consciousness which appears to be the re-

sult of its workings has been built up slowly over thousands of years, and if it were possible to do so, we could determine what every man is thinking merely by his antecedents, environment, education, etc. Allied with this are the various organs of the body which appear to respond to the action of the brain. Both, however, are dependent upon each other, both are bound together by common ancestral ties. (I am now writing from the material, scientific standpoint.) This being the case, neither can control the other, because neither has any independent power of its own. It has been stated that a sudden fright will take away the appetite, and that certain thoughts will change the tissues and secretions of the body and alter its functions. That is true physiologically. It is equally true, also, from this point, that if food is introduced into the stomach which is quite different from what the eater thinks it is, it will likewise produce a discordant effect not only upon the body, but upon the mind. We cannot separate the two things —they go together. Neither controls the other. That which controls the mind and the body, however, is the unknown quantity which doctors and scientists refuse formally to recognize, namely, the spirit. In actual practice, the doctor always recognizes the spirit. He cultivates a bedside manner, he studies

intimately what he terms the "mental" effect upon his patient. He insists for instance, that his patient shall not worry, not understanding that the kind of worry he speaks of is a material affair.

The moment we come to realize that back of the illusory functions of man there is a spirit (referred to by the psychologists as the subconscious, the unconscious or the universal mind), then we enter upon a new world of thought.

But how can you prove all this?

By practice. That is the way all scientists work, as I have already stated. We begin by the hypothesis that all things must proceed from one source, and we call that source the Creator or God. This word is symbolic. It is precisely like the x in algebra for an unknown quantity. Having made this hypothesis, we then promise ourselves that we will adhere to it long enough to see whether it is true, or how far we must correct it to make it true. We keep on thus learning, and correcting, until we finally arrive at the invincible conclusion that there is a God, that he is universal, that his rule is absolute, and that, if we conform to it, we shall become partakers in a glorious peace which passeth all understanding. We learn that all discord can be melted out by Love, and that, if the way seems hard and the process a gradual one, this is to try our faith.

This hypothesis you mention is really conversion, is it not?

No. It is what comes before conversion. The whole process of becoming a Christian, or follower of Christ, is simple and can be reduced to a few sentences. First, one becomes either very much dissatisfied or in downright despair with the world one lives in. Second, one wonders whether there is n't something better. Third, one begins to ponder this question, becoming receptive to the various creeds and alternatives offered. Fourth, in this condition, one drifts about for a long time in hopeless confusion, taking up one belief after another and dropping it. Fifth, one's resolution begins to mount, and the determination comes to find out for one's self. Sixth, one faces the simple proposition that there must be a Creator, and, this being so, he must be all-powerful; therefore one decides to try him. This is the dawning of the hypothesis. Seventh, quite timidly and uncertainly, indeed, almost as a last resort, one starts out on the hypothesis. Eighth, one prays. Prayer is only a longing. One longs. That is right prayer. Ninth, something happens like illumination. It may come through some slight incident. But it changes one's whole life. That is conversion. Tenth, from this point onward there is no going back. It is truly a pilgrim's progress.

You have now made the whole thing so plain, whether we care to believe it or not, that we have only one more question. Can you offer any suggestions for guidance after conversion, assuming that has taken place?

I will do so in the next chapter.

PERSONAL HELPS

In this chapter the author draws upon his personal experience in order to bring home certain meanings.

PERSONAL HELPS

THERE is nothing more universally absorbing to human beings than a struggle. It is the basis of all art. In some form it is present in every masterpiece. The Conqueror is the chief protagonist of all the ages. The business phrase "Competition is the life of trade" may be translated into its spiritual accompaniment by saying "Struggle is the life of the Soul."

It seems strange at first that the forces against which men have to struggle so persistently should be within and not without. Yet such is the case.

Man constantly creates new forms of weakness which tend to undermine his character. These flatten him out. He rises from the ruins to still newer forms. Man created the Roman Empire. Sapped with luxury, it fell, only to be succeeded by new forms of power and, in turn, weakness. Man always reasserts himself. And what we see over the long course in history is the same process duplicated in every individual. "A man may be down, but never out" is the axiom of humanity.

By an inevitable paradox, through the weakness

of human beings flows the thin stream of power that recreates society. Alexander Hamilton, the financial genius of a period, can not pay his personal bills. Indeed, if we were to draw up a material indictment against all the great ones of the earth, they would all be found guilty. Power comes through sharp contact. It is only by hard rubbing that two sticks show heat.

So the struggle of the individual—your struggle and my struggle—is the epitome of the ages. My personal experience, briefly continued in what follows, is probably no different from the majority. It is presented herewith because many others who are on the verge of the same experience, or already going through with it, may be reinforced by the thought that it is common to all.

AN EXPERIENCE

The thing which has always kept me going, even in my darkest moments, was the thought that I must not fail, because there were so many others in the same boat.

But on the very threshold of this record, I want to emphasize the fact that at no period, at no moment, would I have gone back to BEFORE. The most agonizing moment you may experience AFTER is any num-

ber of times better than the most delightful moment you may have experienced BEFORE. Before, you were an animal, chiefly concerned with eating and drinking and making merry. After, you were concerned with something which cannot well be defined, because it reaches out into infinity. All the tribulation which you may seem to endure, although at times it is very real indeed, becomes only incidental.

When I first began to understand that there was a higher power than myself and, in the midst of many doubts and difficulties, to believe in Him a little, I saw at once the necessity of adopting some sort of system in order to know Him better.

It seemed to me reasonable to suppose that if I was giving up such a large part of my time to work and to various material activities, I must, if the source of my whole Being were to be understood, be willing to devote a portion of this time to my Creator.

This decision, which seems, as I now put it, to be so conventional and businesslike, is not only of supreme importance in the spiritual life, but one surrounded by the greatest difficulty. In order to bring out this difficulty into bold relief, it is essential that I should say a few words about two of the greatest stumbling-blocks to spiritual progress, namely, doubt and sensitiveness.

First, then, about doubt. The moment one at-

tempts to cross the threshold that separates the material from the spiritual life, doubt assumes myriad forms, some of them bold and simple, and others so subtle as to be at first unrecognized, It would seem as if all the cleverest people in the world had suddenly been attracted to you, and in every book and paper you pick up, or in every voice that you hear, you will be told why there is no God, and why there is no spiritual life. Besides all this, every form of discouragement will present itself. You will try to be good, and, apparently, you will succeed. While not necessarily looking for any reward, it will be reasonable to suppose that there ought to be some sort of return from this effort on your part. The reverse will be generally true, however. Every one of your fond hopes will be dashed. Here, at random, are some of the things which will rise up against you.

YOU WILL BE TOLD

That the churches are mostly "bunk," filled with hypocrites.

That thinking about religion only makes you morbid, and is a waste of time.

That if God, or whoever is running the world, was a just God, he would not permit so much suffering, war, disease, etc., as now persists, and that as all

these things are so widespread, there is no hope of your escaping them by trying to placate him.

That as soon as you make any effort to be better, things only get worse, so the best way is to go along and not worry.

This list might be indefinitely extended, including the most delicate shades of misgivings. It is enough to indicate the trend.

SENSITIVENESS

Second, sensitiveness. Among all the phenomena of the human consciousness, this is worthy of the most careful study and understanding. If we take any faculty of the mind, such, for instance, as hearing, we shall be astonished to find out its almost unlimited possibilities of development. We know that our ears are tuned in to only a very small fraction of the vibrations constantly going through the ether. The radio shows us this fact very clearly. The radio carries around the world thousands of voices which, when they are properly amplified through delicate instruments invented for the purpose, can be heard in thousands of homes. But ordinarily as we go about, we are wholly unconscious of these millions on millions of waves of sound. Now, in your every-day life, if you will give even slight, but systematic, atten-

tion to your hearing, you will be astonished to discover how it can be trained. In listening to orchestral music, at first it is merely a mass of sound, more or less pleasing to you in proportion as the players are skilled and coördinated. But after you have had a musical training, you will be able to distinguish the various instruments and also to note the most trivial discords, so that, in listening, your capacity on the one hand for enjoyment and on the other for discomfort will be immeasurably increased. The same thing is true about spiritual and cultural values.

SUBTLE DISTINCTIONS

As we become subjected to educational processes, we gradually become more sensitive to distinctions which at first have no meaning; that is, we grow more cultured. Librarians will tell you that readers who begin on trashy books first, will little by little select better ones, as their minds become more sensitive to words. Thus we see that between the so-called highbrow and the lowbrow, both of whom have been so much derided in our public press, there is a wide gulf. Oftentimes the highbrow may be merely a *poseur*, and the lowbrow may know more than he seems to; but generally speaking, the man of culture has an enormously wider range of feeling than the man un-

lettered, or undeveloped in art or music. In the material world, the great importance attributed to education is not all due to the increased earning capacity it gives, but is also due to the mental resources acquired, which enable us to occupy our minds to the very last, when other resources may fail us. All this is quite apparent, and it is not necessary to go into it any further. But if you will apply this law to spiritual development, you will see that spiritual sensitiveness is something the possibilities of which are so incredible that we may well reflect upon it for a moment.

IT IS A NATURAL PROCESS

From the outside, casual, and superficial point of view, however, there is a criticism of it which must here be disposed of. It is that people who devote themselves too much to spiritual things get to be cranks or fanatics. These lose their perspective. Their minds become warped. They think nobody else is right but themselves. They tend to become reformers, which is the lowest state of man. We see people like that around us all the time—people who buttonhole us, preach sermons to us, try to make us better, or patronize us with a kind of deadly and always offensive zeal. All this sort of thing is coun-

terfeit, spurious. The kind of sensitiveness which I am now defining is precisely the same spiritually which we get physically in the development of the hearing or the eyesight. We begin to see and hear things which we never even suspected were there. Moreover,—and this is very important to remember—our passion for accuracy keeps pace with this increased vision. Merely because we are entering upon an unknown and invisible world, a world which we have been repeatedly told by skeptics and scientists does not exist, is no reason why we should allow ourselves to be fooled. We are not going to take anything for granted.

Our spiritual sensitiveness, therefore, increases progressively as we become more intimate and accurately acquainted with the ways of God—ways that constantly elude us, ways which seem at times past finding out, and yet which we do come to see at last are the only ways worth trying to find out.

AS TRUTH GROWS, WE SEE MORE CLEARLY

It thus happens that the errors which in the beginning we were constantly making and which our ignorance made us unaware of, become sharply silhouetted in our consciousness; this enables us quite easily to dispose of them. The crop of them is con-

tinuous. We never can reach the end, because, so long as we are here, our feet cling to earth. But we know now where we are going, and that makes all the difference.

Sensitiveness such as I write about, therefore, is something developed in solitude. It increases by meditation, by a gradual enlargement of one's spiritual horizon.

But—and here is another curious phenomenon—side by side with it comes an increasing indifference to conventional standards, and this very indifference is the best evidence of the fact that the spiritual development is genuine. We discard, throw aside, the human law, right along. We do things which shock orthodox people. We are bound, indeed, by no law on earth. We are accountable only to God. Thus you see the problem of going or not going to church, of giving or not giving, or fasting or not fasting—all these things are immediately solved, or at least are put right up to God to be solved. And neither does that mean that we do nothing ourselves.

ENVY

For instance—we scarcely realize the part that envy plays in our lives; how it trickles in thin subterranean streams through our thought, poisoning and

secretly limiting our energies. We are always automatically and subconsciously making comparisons. Now suppose there is something you long for intensely, and which another possesses. If, in the light of Truth, you come to understand that your mortal sense-self is nothing, and that spiritually you are a reflection of the universal Mind, do you not see that you are actually sharing this longed for possession with that other one? Also: when, through your cooperation and encouragement, you assist another to release the genius within him, do you not see that this is your genius as well as his, always bearing in mind that we create nothing in ourselves? If therefore, you are occupied in any enterprise or business, remember, first, that nobody can stop you from sharing in the total power revealed through this channel, any more than you can prevent others (even if you wanted to) from sharing in the power which flows through you. And this power is increased in proportion as you gradually come to understand that you have no personal responsibility—you are only a trustee.

A NECESSITY

And this is where I take up (after this preface) the thread of my personal experience, as it may possibly be of service to others.

I found, first, that it was necessary for me to give up a part of my time to silence, meditation. And at first this was extremely difficult, very much like some abhorrent system of home exercise, of which there are so many extant. I floundered about a great deal, testing out various periods of the day to find one which would be uninterrupted. Little by little I discovered that there was no particular period that answered. Then it slowly dawned on me that I was doing with one day precisely what the average Christian was doing with one week, when he set aside Sunday to be good in and all the rest of the week did as he pleased. This led me to see that spiritual development is unceasing, that it must necessarily go on all the time, that there is not a moment of the day or night when there can be any let-up.

This was a tremendous proposition. At first, the hopelessness, the finality of it, staggered me. How was I to earn a living? The worst of it was that the whole affair had to be carried off in silence, nobody was to know anything about it, and, in particular, I was to act all the time as if nothing had happened to me.

NOTHING IS EASIER!

Now the really marvelous thing about all this is that, in actual practice, it is the very easiest thing in

the world to do. It is more than easy, it is inevitable. One simply cannot help doing it when one has got going. I hasten to say at once that I should dislike very much to give the impression that, in my case, it is at all well done. I don't see how it can ever be well done here on earth, when we are all so rooted in material things. But that is beside the question. The important thing is to keep at it all the time, and that one cannot help.

Old habits cling. In the old days I used to swear in the most accomplished manner. I may break out now again at any moment. What of it? I do it less and less, because, as my spiritual sensitiveness increases, there is no occasion for it. Tranquillity must grow, and as tranquillity grows, explosives cease.

What really happens is that one is swimming up a stream of consciousness, .and constantly being met with floating debris of materialism. Knowing that one's destination is God, indeed that the stream one is in, in spite of its floating obstacles and impurities, is a stream of life, one pushes these things aside and just keeps on.

Prayer, in its right meaning, is simply the constant consciousness of the immediate presence of God, and that is all that I mean by this matter of spiritual control. This spiritual control is as constant as one can

make it, through day and night, and one's work goes right on, one's ordinary life goes right on, without interruption, only the whole mass of it is now on a higher plane. I discovered, indeed, that my work, instead of suffering, was so much easier and better done that the contemplation of increased accomplishment filled me with awe. It seemed to me that whereas before I had been doing it myself, now it was being done for me.

DON'T BE DISHEARTENED AT FIRST

If, after reading what I have written, you care to try this method of constant spiritual attention, you will find at first that you are always lapsing. You may get up in the morning with the best intentions. You say to yourself: "I will think about God all day. I will feel that he is with me all the time." Then you will forget, and at night, so busy have you been, you will be overcome with a feeling of remorse that not once have you followed your resolution.

Do not let this trouble you too much.

I have been at it a long time, and I lapse constantly. Every one does. The great thing in the beginning is the intention, and then, little by little, you will get into the habit of recovering yourself spiritually at all moments of the day and night.

The Children of Israel, you know, were guided by a pillar of fire. Well, you will carry a spiritual torch in your hand. It will keep going out and you will keep lighting it again. At first it will stay out for long periods. Then the periods will begin to close up. They will never quite close up. But what happens is that the habit of closing them grows on you more and more.

The Bible is an asset the importance of which can never be overestimated.

This attitude I am trying to define will be seen on reflection to be a reversal of everything you have previously thought about spiritual values. It places everything spiritual first, and relegates everything else to a subordinate position. And this is true of the Bible. What I mean is that the Bible comes first, not last. Yet here reserve your judgment until the idea is explained more fully.

Remember that the great controversy about whether the Bible is true or not, whether it is inspired or not, in common with all other theological questions like it, has nothing to do with our case. I subject the Bible to the same test to which I subject everything else. In actual experience, after conversion, I discovered that out of it, as I have stated, came more direct messages, more specific directions, more help, or perhaps I should say more sustaining power, than

from any other agency. How then should it be read?

Never, if you do not feel the need of reading it. Most people, apparently, do not feel this need, as they never read it.

It is a true guide to the spiritual life. It is, virtually, the only guide. It is n't so much a question of reading it once a day or twice a day, like a daily dozen. It is wholly a question of living with it.

And in doing this, it will gradually come to you that you yourself are David, you are going over the same road traversed by the Children of Israel.

There are two things in the Bible which, if your spiritual life is correct, you will study and follow all the time. You will do this because you will feel the constant need. One is the Ten Commandments, and the other, the Sermon on the Mount. The spiritual meaning of these two great pillars of light will gradually come to you. The commandments, when understood spiritually, do not entail any prohibitions. They are mileposts of materialism.

The third part of the Bible, which has more sustaining power than any other, except those placed first, is the Psalms. One cannot escape, nor does one want to escape, reading the Psalms constantly.

THE LAST WORD

In this chapter the author completes his circle of inquiry and analysis, and shows that every Individual cannot escape the consequences of his own acts; also that America is in danger, and can only be saved by an awakening on the part of all individuals. He further shows the happiness and peace of the spiritual life, based on a union of patriotism and self-surrender.

THE LAST WORD

ADAM and Eve are permanent symbols of humanity. If for a moment we will abandon all idea of time and picture America as the Garden of Eden on a large scale, we shall see ourselves more clearly in the light of truth.

This Garden of Eden of ours, literally, is a promised land, flowing with milk and honey—and oil. It is a land peculiarly favored, because of its isolation and natural resources. Thus self-supporting, and protected hitherto by wide wastes of water from the attacks of predatory nations, with extraordinary rapidity it has achieved a notable distinction among all other nations, being easily the richest and most prosperous. Settled originally by dour Pilgrims and Puritans of forbidding aspect, iron characters, and grim religious convictions, it has become one of the most successful self-governing countries in the world, having been able thus far to resist that kind of slow disintegration which comes from material satiety. This has been quite largely due to the fact that the inhabitants, up to the present period, have been occupied in developing

their enormous resources, this occupation keeping them absorbed and, in a sense, fairly sanitary.

Thus America, with a Nordic background of sustained character-strength, has held its own and succeeded in developing a racial personality, which stands out in bold relief. From its town meeting has flowered a kind of genius in self-government which, in spite of many deterrent elements, has given it a peculiar stability.

Its almost miraculous separation from the parent stem (due to a large extent to the friendly help of France in a crisis), the labored birth of its constitution, the emancipation of its slaves, the victory of the Union, and, more recently, the restraint shown after the destruction of the battleship *Maine* in Havana Harbor, its sober deliberation and entrance into the World War, its self-searching and establishment of prohibition, these achievements, and many more, show, among all peoples, an unusual quality and spirit. America has great traditions, great accomplishments, great men back of it.

THE REVERSE SIDE

On the other hand, at this moment there are many signs of disintegration. We foster ten million illiterates, while we boast of our educational system.

We exploit children in factories for commercial purposes. Our record of crime and our lynchings are the constant derision of peoples who are in many other respects quite inferior to us. Our present leaders in all branches of activity—politics, letters, or religion—do not inspire confidence, and in particular, too many of our newspapers and periodicals encourage sensation and indecency. Tranquillity is almost, if not quite, unknown in our homes. Noise reigns supreme. Music, art, and letters are probably on lower levels among us than ever before among a people otherwise so generally intelligent. Waste is the order of the day and night. Among us, there are undoubtedly great artists in every field, but their names are unknown to the mass of the people, whose minds are filled with sporting and moving-picture stars, who loom thus large in the public eye because of the fabulous incomes they are reported to earn. Worldly possessions are the sole standard of popular acclamation. Nowhere among us is there evidence of a longing for the beautiful, hordes of people in their leisure hours preferring either to desecrate the countryside, or to revel in the clustered ugliness of roller-coasters and hot-dog wagons. Symmetry, charm, and elegance of design are absent from our architecture. Even the picture palaces of our rich, with rare exceptions, are generally notable

for vulgarity and ostentation rather than beauty. We seem to have learned nothing in the art of quiet and simple living.

THE ONE GREAT IDEA

Yet our country, take it for all in all, has got something tucked away inside of it worth living and dying for. It has got at least a hold on Liberty. Plato, who, as we look back on our receding historical horizon, still looms largest because he contributed to the world the beauty of ideas,—and this wholly separated from the ecclesiastical sentimentality which, later on, restricted them to sects,—Plato enables us to see the beauty of this idea of Liberty to which America, with all its youthful shortcomings, stands dedicated to-day as never before. It is in our air. The people of Europe know and feel this. That was why they fell weeping at the feet of Woodrow Wilson when, during the war, he appeared among them. It is a mistake to suppose that they come here solely for money, any more than we ourselves, beneath the surface of our material life, worship money solely. They come here—when they can get here—because this is a land of practical equality. In presenting these violent contrasts in our national life, it should be understood that I am merely showing the real and

the unreal. Just as each one of us has an unreal personality of vulgarity, greed, and so on, and a real personality made in the image of God, so our country, on a large scale, is one of corresponding contrast. So much, briefly, for America as a whole.

THE NORM

Let us now consider the individual as he exists today in America, whether he be a naturalized citizen or not, who lives on our soil and gets his daily bread and cake out of it. How does he compare, so far as can be determined, with any other individual who has existed at any previous period in the history of the world? With an Egyptian landholder in the time of Pharaoh? With a Greek olive-grower in the days of Pericles? With a mediæval serf? It is doubtful if his mental occupations, while more various and exciting, are any higher. He is still liable for conscription, for war appears to be as imminent as ever. But in almost, if not quite, all other respects he is better off. The chances of his again becoming a slave are negligible. He is a free man. He takes his part in the councils of the land. There is no office, no matter how high (provided he is a citizen, and, in certain cases, has been born here) to which he cannot aspire. Indeed, a list of men born

in foreign lands who have come to America and risen to distinction would be a striking object-lesson in democracy. The American individual shares with his fellow-citizens the widespread benefits of an interchange of ideas, of friendly intercourse with his neighbors, of all those various blessings which come from neighborly intercourse—good feeling, good humor, tolerance, and love.

WHERE THE GAIN LIES

I think all will agree with me that this difference, thus imperfectly outlined, between the individual of to-day and the individual of yesterday, is very great.

But I defy anyone, be he scientist or philosopher, biologist or evolutionist, to say that this enormous gain is not spiritual. Did we fight for the emancipation of our slaves (and that is what we really fought for) because we could have had the faintest idea of the colossal expansion, the astonishing prosperity, which has come to us since the Civil War? Certainly not. We fought for an idea, and because it was a spiritual idea, this material expansion followed. The question is now, whether we are going to destroy ourselves in our feverish pursuit of false gods. In my opinion, nothing but a miracle can save us, but I believe that the miracle will occur.

WHO CAN DENY THIS?

Is it not plain, therefore, that our country is bigger than each one of us and that the world is still bigger than we are? Is it not written in blood in the past and scored across the sky of the present, that we must save ourselves individually first, before we can save our country, and that, if we do not do this, the world will be lost? Is it not plain that our cheap and trivial occupations, our vulgar trailing of doubtful pleasures, our vanities and envyings and concern over our individual piles, are as nothing compared with the danger that confronts us?

Is it not plain that your happiness and peace of mind, and that of your children, depend in the long run upon the happiness and peace of your country, and that the two cannot be separated? Once admit this to be true, and is it not plain, in the face of the mass of evidence I have presented, and which cannot be denied by any one of common sense, that nothing but a widespread awakening is going to save us?

This is not a question of going to the polls once every two years. It is a question of being there all the time.

The individual and the nation are inseparable, I repeat. God, the world, and the individual are all

inseparable. Thus we complete the sacred circle and come back to the place where we started in the beginning of this book.

YOU AND I

It only remains to be said, so far as you and I are concerned (and if the reader has been patient enough to follow me faithfully through these pages, he will understand that we are one in our purpose), that our whole problem is to deal with Headquarters, and that by doing this, it is always given to us to know what to do.

In the nature of things, we can depend upon nobody but ourselves. If I have insisted too much upon this, it is because in no other way can we attain absolute spiritual freedom. The instant we make this primal resolution to stand or fall by our own efforts, we become dominant. We are backed up by God, who first demands of us that we show our mettle, our spirit and resolution, and then makes us the medium throughout which flow the powers of the universe. The very powers of evil, those demons of illusion which have previously so frightened us, are now made to serve us. It remained for a woman, the immortal Teresa, to give us a rule of conduct, both practical and spiritual, which reveals a more

profound insight into the ways of God and man than shown by all the long line of philosophers when she wrote:

"Never try to sustain yourself by any human artifice, or will perish of famine as you deserve. . . . If He is pleased with you, those who like you least will give you food against their will. . . . To calculate what we shall receive from others seems to me like reckoning up their riches, and all your care will not change their minds nor make them wish to give you alms."

And again:

"Everything depends on people having a great and most resolute determination never to halt until they reach their journey's end, happen what may, whatever the consequences are, cost what it will, let who will blame them, whether they reach the goal or die on the road."

THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW, BUT ONLY TRUE, HAPPY WAY

To those, hitherto indifferent to consequences and absorbed by their own material prosperity, who are (possibly by some sudden misfortune) suddenly faced by this inexorable obligation to make good spiritually, let me say that the way is much easier than it

seems. In the first place, no material occupation, either of the intellect or the senses, can compare with this spiritual occupation thus indicated. Everything which belongs to the body, and which has hitherto appeared so important, becomes at once incidental. Besides, there is no other way. You cannot escape the consequences of your absorption in materialism. No material occupation, either of the intellect or the senses, can compare with the spiritual occupation for interest and absorption. Indeed, no comparison is possible, for one is death and the other, life. While undoubtedly difficulties present themselves, and at certain moments one feels absolutely desolate, these pass, and the sodden fear about one's maintenance which blights the happiness of so many lives (even among those in apparent material prosperity, for things are relative) is slowly but irrevocably removed. One *is* maintained, always. Merely as a severely practical affair, it will be seen that if you remove from any man his sense of fear, if you fill his mind with thoughts of love, cheerfulness, self-respect, confidence, patience, and hope, in place of envy, suspicion, hatred, and discouragement, it follows that he is bound to be more efficient, as a man. It also follows that he is bound to be healthier. When, in addition, you give him the certainty that there is a God and that God sustains him, it is easy to see that such

a man is immediately lifted up to a much higher level than before. Thus religion proves itself by the severest practical tests.

WHAT ARE RICHES?

Then again, it is important to note that, in this world's goods, we are rich only so far as we are able to give out, and not so far as we simply receive. The world, as we conceive it in any aspect, material or otherwise, is not so bad as we sometimes think. It cannot get along without us, if we have what it needs. Thus an efficient worker, even if discharged from one place, will often be surprised how quickly he will get a job somewhere else. What we have we never can conceal, because in the invisible world—which is the only real world—everything is instantly communicated. We need to do nothing except to keep ourselves constantly up to the scratch. Indeed, it is even amusing, when we thus make ourselves internally efficient, how anxious others are to secure our services, and how they even conceal this from us for fear that we shall get too sure about it. The moral law is absolute. Boasting is fatal. To the last jot, the moral law is based on mathematical principles. It is a universal truth that we can receive nothing unless we give. The money we possess, therefore, is of no

consequence compared with our natural capacities, and when the fear of money is removed from us, our natural capacities are increased, so that money comes tc us as needed. More than we need may be much worse than less. If any one doubts that all this is true, let him sit down calmly, face and examine himself in honor and honesty, and he will discover that he has always received exactly what he deserved.

Neither let us be deceived by the fancied security and apparent happiness of those always restless people who appear to be materially successful and pass their time in idle pleasures. Constant absorption in his material self inevitably limits the individual to the narrow horizon of this self. Dependent upon nothing else, his end is certain. He disappears like a mist, because there never was anything real about him. If your arm has become atrophied through some defect of circulation, and it is cut off and buried, nothing has been taken away from you. Neither poverty nor riches, as ideas, have any real place in the consciousness of man.

God is no respecter of persons. Thomas Jefferson was quite right when he stated that all men are born equal. This sublime sentence, even if but dimly understood, has done its share in fixing the idea of Liberty in the national consciousness. We are all equal spiritually, which is the only reality.

Our capacity to be the medium through which power flows can be measured only by our victory over the world of the senses. Thus each one of us, no matter how humble his occupation or limited his material intellect, shares the power of the spirit with the greatest. Our mortal bodies are often frail and imperfect structures, racked by the evil let loose through the idle gossip of material people; but nevertheless, the spirit works through them; witness John Bunyan and Robert Burns.

The sayings of Christ, constantly studied and rightly interpreted, furnish an unfailing guide for spiritual advancement.

Only in the way I have indicated—through humility, through conversion, through understanding, can we as individuals, our country, and the world be saved. All things will then be added unto us.

THE END

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